The Right Honorable W. E. Gladstone

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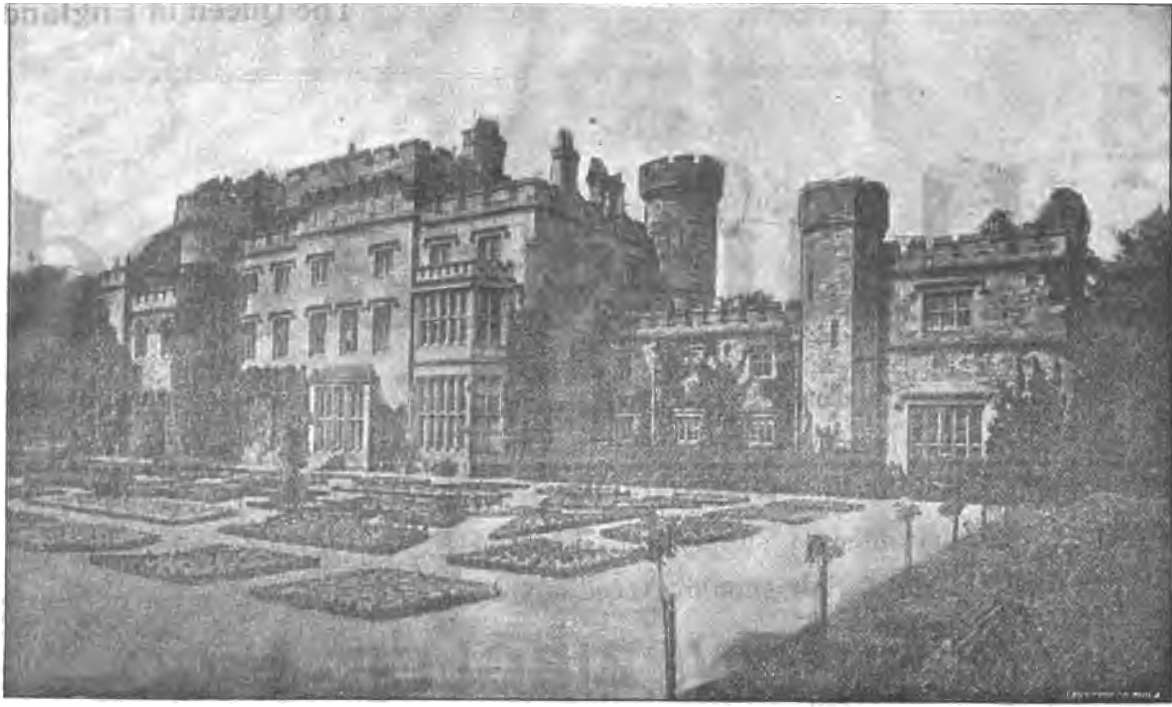

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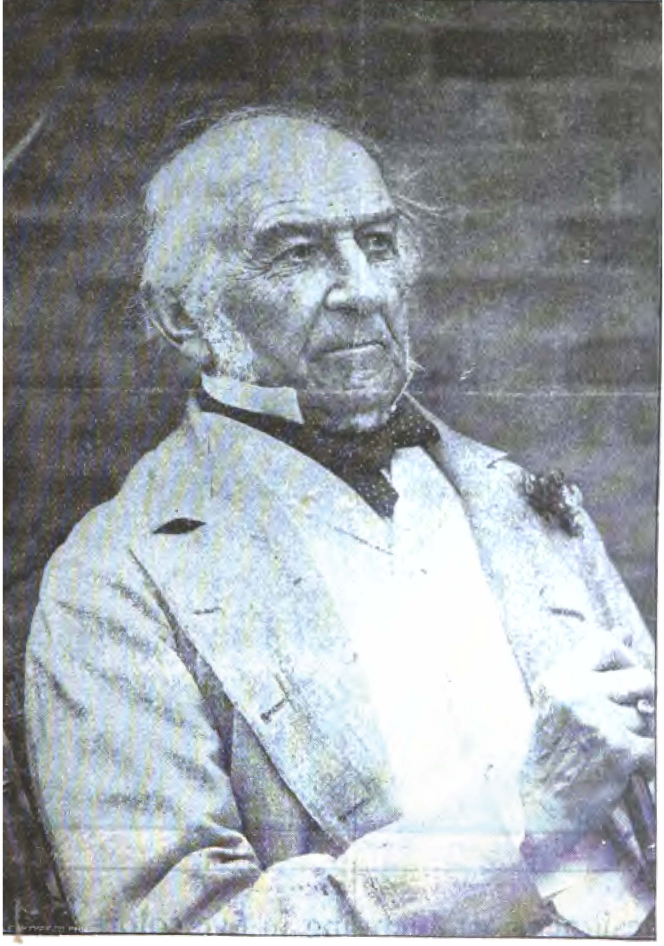
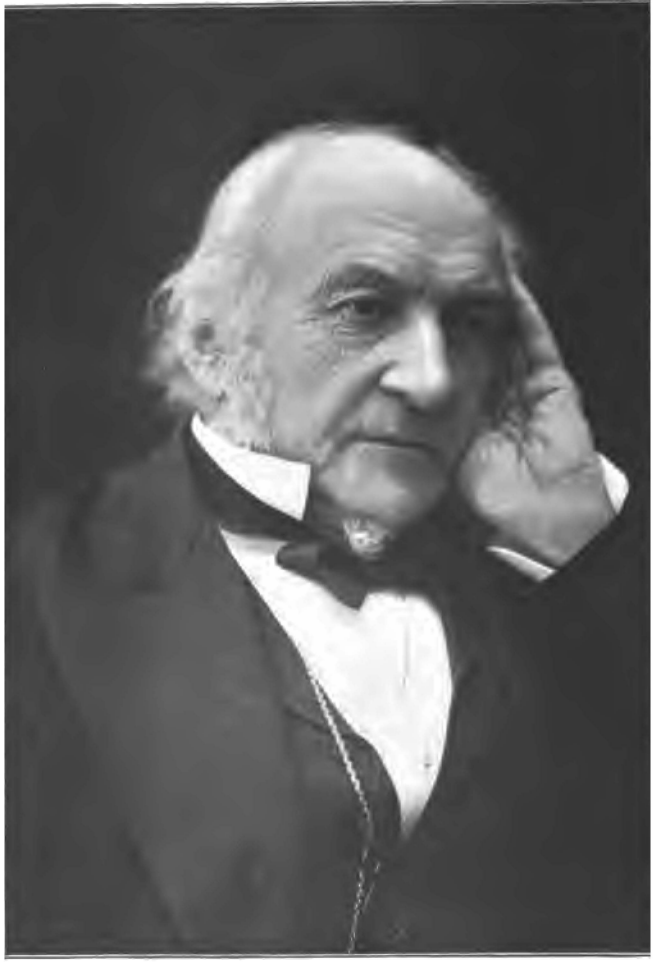


W. Gladstone

MRS. WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE.

Wife of the English Statesman.

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.



RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

THE

RIGHT HONORABLE

W. E. GLADSTONE.

A Study from Life.

BY

HENRY W. LUCY,

AUTHOR OF

"A DIARY OF TWO PARLIAMENTS."

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PREFACE.

THE obvious difficulty of writing within the limits of this volume a sketch of the career of Mr. Gladstone is the superabundance of material. The task is akin to that of a builder having had placed at his disposal materials for a palace, with instructions to erect a cottage residence, leaving out nothing essential to the larger plan. I have been content, keeping this condition in mind, rapidly to sketch, in chronological order, the main course of a phenomenally busy life, enriching the narrative wherever possible with autobiographical scraps to be found in the library of Mr. Gladstone's public speeches, supplementing it by personal notes made over a period of twenty years, during which I have had unusual opportunities of studying the subject.

HENRY W. LUCY.

REFORM CLUB,
February, 1895.

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MR. GLADSTONE.

A STUDY FROM LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

BOYHOOD.

Of Mr. Gladstone's manifold moods there was none more charming to the House of Commons than that in which he sometimes chatted with it on a Tuesday or a Friday night. This happened in days when such opportunities were still reserved for private members. Neither the Leader of the House nor the Leader of the Opposition had direct concern in what was going forward. Ordinary men in Mr. Gladstone's position would have been glad to make the most of opportunity for comparative rest. For him, Parliamentary debate, of whatever character, was, up to the last, irresistible. Being present, he listened with flattering, even dangerous, interest to whosoever might be speaking, however personally unimportant. The hon. member, chilled by inattention in other parts of the House, might, in Mr. Gladstone's absence, have earlier concluded his remarks. Finding him an attentive, apparently an entranced, listener, he went on to the fullest limits of his notes.

That was one consequence of conscientious habit on the part of the great Parliamentarian. Another, not infrequent, was that he himself was drawn into the debate, forthwith lifting it to the height of his own stature, luring into the fray other Parliamentary giants who had entered the House innocent of intention to take part in the current proceedings. Complaint was made by stern, unbending business men that debate was thus unnecessarily prolonged. Compensation was forthcoming when, as sometimes happened on these occasions, Mr. Gladstone indulged in a vein of reminiscence, chatting about old times and faded faces. With elbow leaning on the brass-bound box, he spoke, in low conversational tone, of Canning, O'Connell, Lord Aberdeen, Sir James Graham, Cobden, and others whom he had known and worked with in years long past. The scene ever recalled Priam sitting at the Scæan gate in company with the seniors of the Trojan race who —

> Leaned on the walls and basked before the sun,
> Chiefs who no more in bloody fights engage,
> But wise through time and narrative with age,
> In summer days like grasshoppers rejoice.

This charming lapse into retrospect has sometimes occurred to Mr. Gladstone outside the House of Commons, supplying his future biographer with peeps into his past, of otherwise unattainable precision and graphic force. Born in Liverpool on the 29th of December, 1809, he revisited the city eighty-three years later to the very month. It was on the 3rd of December, 1892, a memorable stage in a mar-

vellous career. Once more, after being flung into an apparently bottomless pit, Mr. Gladstone, undismayed, lightly carrying the weight of fourscore years, had, practically single-handed, his worst enemies those of his own household, stubbornly fought his way back to power. Conservative Liverpool, having done its best to defeat the abhorred statesman at the polls, welcomed the honored son, affectionately endowing him with citizenship.

It was the good fortune of the writer to be present on this occasion, as, indeed, he has, with very few exceptions, chanced to be within hearing of all the important speeches made by Mr. Gladstone in Parliament and beyond its doors during the last twenty years. A man of singularly strong affection, Mr. Gladstone has through his long life clung to his native town. "I am hardly a Liverpool man," he once said, "but I was a Liverpool boy." Standing on the platform in St. George's Hall, facing an enthusiastic crowd, memories of long ago teemed in the brain of the youngest citizen. "Many long years," he said, in full, rich voice that made music in the furthest recesses of the many-pillared hall, "have separated me from familiarity with the community of Liverpool, and Liverpool herself has, within these years, multiplied and transformed. When my recollections of her were most familiar, she was a town of one hundred thousand persons, and the silver cloud of smoke which floated above her resembled that which might appear over any

secondary borough or village of the country. I refer to the period between 1810 and 1820, and it is especially to the latter part of that period that my memory extends. I used as a small boy to look southward along shore from my father's windows at Seaforth to the town. In those days the space between Liverpool and Seaforth was very differently occupied. Four miles of the most beautiful sands that I ever knew offered to the aspirations of the youthful rider the most delightful method of finding access to Liverpool, and he had the other inducement to pursue that road, that there was no other decent avenue to the town. Bootle I remember a wilderness of Sandhills. I have seen wild roses growing upon the very ground which is now the centre of the borough. All that land is now partly covered with residences, and partly with places of business and industry. In my time but one single house stood upon the space between Rimrose brook and the town of Liverpool. I rather think it was associated with the name of Statham, if my memory serves me right, the name of the town clerk of Liverpool."

Here is a marvellous memory. He sees again the solitary house standing between the now long-defiled Rimrose brook and the silver cloud of smoke which lay over the potentialities of Liverpool, and even remembers the name of the resident.

Mr. Gladstone's earliest recorded recollection was of a visit paid in company with his mother to Mrs.

Hannah More. "I believe," he says, "I was four years old at the time, and I remember that she presented me with one of her little books — not uninteresting for children — and that she told me she gave it me because I had just come into the world and she was just going out." Hannah More was born in 1745, the year when Prince Charlie won Edinburgh and triumphed at Prestonpans. Round her cradle there must have been whispered talk of Culloden, an epoch with which that hand-shake with Hannah More linked the greatest figure of the closing years of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Gladstone has personal recollections of a later war which had its Culloden for a far greater soldier than Charles Edward Stuart. He visited Edinburgh when he was five years old, and distinctly remembers hearing the glass in the windows of the Royal Hotel, at which his father stayed, rattle to the roar of the guns of the Castle as they announced one of the steps in the progress of Napoleon to Elba. He does not identify the particular occasion. It was in all probability the surrender of Paris to the allies, which took place on the 31st of March, 1814.

A still earlier reminiscence Mr. Gladstone once confided to me. He told me that, sprawling about on the nursery floor at an age that could not have exceeded eighteen months, he obtained, and at the time he was speaking retained over a lapse of eighty years, a vivid recollection of the pattern of his nurse's dress.

Of another member of the domestic household in Rodney Street, Liverpool, Mr. Gladstone has a charming story. She was a Welsh girl, fresh from her mountain home, and confident that all the universe moved round Snowdon. It was just after Waterloo, and all the talk was of sieges and battles, routs and victories. The patriotic Welsh girl made so clear to the little Liverpool boy the prominent part Wales had played in the Peninsular War, that he never forgot it. "She told me," Mr. Gladstone says in a voice still unconsciously awestruck, "that Sir Watkin Williams Wynn sent millions of men to fight Boney."

"I am not slow to claim the name of Scotchman," Mr. Gladstone told a delighted audience at Dundee during one of the Midlothian Campaigns, "and, even if I were, there is the fact staring me in the face that not a drop of blood runs in my veins except what is derived from Scottish ancestry." Nevertheless, contiguity to Wales, early in life and late, has endeared the Principality to him. "My boyhood," he told an audience gathered at Wirral, "was passed at the mouth of the Mersey in sight of Wales. In those days I was a fervent admirer of Moel Vammau and other Welsh mountains. But as to getting into Wales, as to getting from Liverpool to Birkenhead, that was a formidable affair. You would have to hunt about to hire somebody with a little boat, and he would have had to put off from the Liverpool side and contend with the strong tide of the Mersey as

best he could. In point of fact, we used to look across the Mersey in those days from the Lancashire coast to the Cheshire coast very much as a man looks now — or rather perhaps with more sense of distance than a man looks now — from the Cliffs of Dover, or from the pier at Folkestone, across to the Coast of France."

Here is another glimpse of prehistoric Wales interesting to the sojourner at Rhyl, Llandudno, and the long line of bathing-machine towns that to-day cluster on the north coast. "I remember," says Mr. Gladstone, "paying my first visit to North Wales, travelling along the North Wales coast as far as Bangor and Carnarvon, when there was no such thing as a watering-place, no such thing as a house to be hired for the purpose of those visits that are now paid by thousands of people to such multitudes of points all along the coast. It was supposed that if ever any body of gentlemen could be found sufficiently energetic to make a railway to Holyhead, that railway could not possibly pierce the country, and must be made along the coast, and, if carried along the coast, could not possibly be made to pay. So firm was that conviction that — I very well recollect the day — a large and important deputation of railway leaders went to London and waited upon Sir Robert Peel, who was then Prime Minister, in order to demonstrate to him that it was totally impossible for them to construct a paying line, and therefore to impress upon his mind the necessity of his agreeing

to give them a considerable grant out of the consolidated fund. Sir Robert Peel was a very circumspect statesman, and not least so in those matters in which the public purse was concerned. He encouraged them to take a more sanguine view. Whether he persuaded them into a more sanguine tone of mind I do not know. This I know, the railway was made, and we now understand that this humble railway, this impossible railway, as it was then conceived, is at the present moment the most productive and remunerative part of the whole vast system of the North Western Company."

Mr. Gladstone perfectly remembers the old coaching system, the decay of which before the irresistible advance of the steam engine he speaks of not without regret. "The system was," he says, "raised to the highest degree of perfection, far exceeding that or anything of the kind to be met with on the Continent." At Eton, between the years 1820 and 1830, he went to and from school and home by coach. The coaches were changed at Birmingham. "Our coach," he says, "used to arrive at Birmingham about three or four o'clock in the morning, when we were turned out into the open street till it might please a new coach with a new equipment to appear. There was no building in the town, great or small, public or private, at that period, upon which it was possible for a rational being to fix his eye with satisfaction."

Of later date are his recollections of Edinburgh. "I knew Edinburgh in the days of Lord Moncreiff,

of Dr. Gordon, of Dr. Thomson, of Bishop Sandford, and of many very remarkable men. I had the honor of having spent many weeks in Edinburgh and its neighborhood with a man whose name will always remain illustrious as perhaps the most distinguished son and greatest ornament of the Presbyterian system — I mean Dr. Chalmers. I have heard Dr. Chalmers preach and lecture, and I think I have heard him converse. Being a man entirely of Scotch blood, I am very much attached to Scotland and like even the Scotch accent. But not the Scotch accent of Dr. Chalmers. Undoubtedly in preaching and delivery it was a considerable impediment. Notwithstanding that, it was all overborne by the power of the man in preaching, overborne by his power which melted into harmony with all the adjuncts and incidents of the man as a whole; so much so that, although I would have said that the accent of Dr. Chalmers was distasteful, yet in Dr. Chalmers himself I would not have altered it in the smallest degree."

"It is hardly an exaggeration to say," Mr. Gladstone observed, speaking at Dundee in 1890, "that at the time when I was a youth of ten or fifteen years of age, there was hardly anything that was beautiful produced in this country. I remember at a period of my life, when I was about eighteen, I was taken over to see a silk factory in Macclesfield. At that time Mr. Huskisson, whose name ought always to be remembered with respect among all sound econo-

mists, and the Government of Lord Liverpool had been making the first efforts, not to break down — that was reserved for their happier followers — but to lessen, to modify, or perhaps I should say to mitigate, a little if possible the protective system. Down to the period of Mr. Huskisson silk handkerchiefs from France were prohibited. They were largely smuggled, and no gentleman went over to Paris without, if he could manage it, bringing back in his pockets, his purse, his portmanteau, his hat, or his great-coat, handkerchiefs and gloves. But Mr. Huskisson carried a law in which, in lieu of this prohibition of these French articles, a duty of thirty per cent was imposed on them, and it is in my recollection that there was a keener detestation of Mr. Huskisson, and a more violent passion roused against him in consequence of that mild, initial measure than ever was associated in the other camp, in the Protectionist camp, within the career of Cobden and Bright. I was taken to this manufactory, and they produced the English silk handkerchief they were in the habit of making, and which they thought it cruel to be competed with by the silk handkerchiefs of France, although even before they were allowed to compete the French manufacturer had to pay the fine of thirty per cent on the value. It was in that first visit to a manufactory in Macclesfield that — I will not say I became a Free Trader, for it was ten or fifteen years later when I entered into the full faith of that policy — but from what I saw then there

dawned upon my mind the first ray of light. What I thought when they showed me these handkerchiefs was, 'How detestable they really are, and what in the world can be the object of coaxing, nursing, coddling up manufacturers to produce goods such as those which you ought to be ashamed of exhibiting.'"

CHAPTER II.

HIS KINSFOLK.

Sir Bernard Burke, who has great success in tracing far-reaching lineages for men who achieve greatness, has been able to find the blood of Henry III. of England and Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, in the veins of Mr. Gladstone. Still more interesting, possibly more authentic, is a memorandum I find in a note addressed to me by the late Mr. W. H. Gladstone. Writing from Hawarden Rectory, under date November 13th, 1881, he says: "Through my mother's mother, who was a Neville (Mary, daughter of the second Lord Braybrooke) my father becomes connected with Lord Chatham, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Grenville, former Prime Ministers, and Mr. Windham, former Chancellor of the Exchequer."

Mr. Gladstone's father was a merchant in Liverpool, whither he had gone from Leith, where Thomas Gladstone, grandfather of William, had established himself as a corn-merchant. The Gladstones have, as far as records go, been remarkable for large families. Mr. Gladstone's great-grandfather (who, by the way, spelled his name "Gledstanes") had eleven children. His fourth son, Thomas, had sixteen; and it will best indicate the social and commercial position of Mr. Gladstone's grandfather to

record the fact that he was able to "do something" for his seven surviving sons as they successively started in business.

John Gladstone, the father of William Ewart, did not hide his talent in a napkin. At an early age he settled in Liverpool as a sort of clerk in the house of Corrie & Co., a firm in which he presently became a partner. When, some sixteen years later, the firm of Corrie, Gladstone & Bradshaw was dissolved, John Gladstone took into partnership his brother Robert, and began with fresh ardor to extend his commercial operations. The new firm were among the earliest traders with Russia, and they snatched at the East India trade when the monopoly of the old East India Company was broken down. But their principal business was with the West Indies, where John Gladstone held large sugar plantations, — a circumstance which, as we shall see, had a good deal to do with moulding the early political career of his illustrious son.

Mr. Gladstone was proudly fond of his father. When he sojourned in St. James's Square in the closing years of his residence in London he had hung up in the dining-room a portrait of his father, brought from Hawarden, one of his few personal possessions in the hired mansion. Speaking about him at Leith, where John Gladstone had served an apprenticeship in his father's office, he said: "I will not dwell at length upon the personal portraiture of my father. I may presume perhaps to say this, that

while it is only for the world to look upon him mainly in the light of an active and successful merchant, who, like many merchants of the country, distinguished himself by an energetic philanthropy, so far as his children are concerned, when they think of him they can remember nothing except his extraordinary claims upon their profound gratitude and affection."

In a later year the illustrious son drew this graphic picture of a strong individuality: "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. He was full of bodily and mental vigor. Whatsoever his hand found to do, he did it with his might. He could not understand or tolerate those who, perceiving an object to be good, did not at once actively pursue it. With all this energy he joined a corresponding warmth and, so to speak, eagerness of affection, a keen appreciation of humor, in which he found a rest, and an indescribable frankness and simplicity of character, which, crowning his own qualities, made him, I think (and I strive to think impartially), nearly, or quite, the most interesting old man I have ever known."

The Gladstones as a family always had a superabundance of energy, which carried their action beyond the limits of their private concerns. We find some of the earlier heads of the family responsible Kirk elders. John Gladstone, brought into contact at a critical epoch with the active life of a growing community like that of Liverpool, soon

began to take a prominent part in public affairs. When, in 1812, Canning fought a famous election in Liverpool, he threw himself heart and soul into the advocacy of the cause of the great Minister. He addressed public meetings on his behalf, and it was from the balcony of his house in Rodney Street that Mr. Canning spoke to the enthusiastic crowd who, as the result of the election, hailed him Member for Liverpool.

There was in the house at the time a little boy destined to fill a larger space in history even than Canning. William Ewart Gladstone was in his third year at this time, and doubtless from some upper window looked out with wondering eyes on the turbulent crowd, and heard the Minister talking of Catholic Emancipation and other strange matters. In fact, we have his personal testimony on this interesting point. On the 29th December, 1879, on the occasion of his reaching his seventieth year, Mr. Gladstone received at Hawarden a deputation of Liverpool gentlemen, who brought hearty congratulations and a costly present. In the course of his acknowledgment he said: "You have referred to my connection with Liverpool, and it has happened to me singularly enough to have the incidents of my personality, the association of my personality, if I may so speak, curiously divided between the Scotch extraction, which is purely and absolutely Scotch as to every drop of blood in my veins, and, on the other hand, a nativity in Liverpool, which is the scene of

my earliest recollections. And very early those recollections are, for I remember, gentlemen, what none of you could possibly recollect: I remember the first election of Mr. Canning in Liverpool."

That was in 1812, a far cry to 1879. The review becomes the more imposing when we reflect what a foremost part Mr. Gladstone had taken in moulding the momentous events that have happened between the two dates. "Washington," he once said, "is to my mind the purest figure in history." But of all the great men with whom Mr. Gladstone has at one time or another come into personal contact, he probably retained the greatest admiration and reverence for Canning. "I was bred under the shadow of the great name of Canning," he one night told the House of Commons. "Every influence connected with that name governed the politics of my childhood and of my youth. With Canning I rejoiced in the removal of religious disabilities, and in the character which he gave to our policy abroad. With Canning I rejoiced in the opening he made towards the establishment of free commercial interchanges between nations. With Canning, and under the shadow of that great name, and under the shadow of the yet more venerable name of Burke, my youthful mind and imagination were impressed."

John Gladstone entered Parliament some years later. I do not know whether he heard the maiden speech of the member for Newark, but he certainly sat in the same Parliament with his son, and lived

long enough to see the magnificent promise of his youth partially realized. In 1845 Sir Robert Peel, partly in recognition of personal merit, doubtless in compliment to the brilliant young colleague who was the bright particular star of his Ministry, made the elder Gladstone a baronet. Six years later, in the year of the Great Exhibition, Sir John died, mourned by troops of friends, full of years and honors and riches.

The title went to Thomas, his eldest son. Whilst he lived no one out of the limits of the county of Kincardine knew or heard of Sir Thomas Gladstone. Sometimes during the Parliamentary Session people passing through the lobby of the House of Commons were startled at the sight of a tall spare figure, with a face singularly like Mr. Gladstone's, if one could imagine it with the fire gone out. A quiet, retiring country gentleman, Sir Thomas Gladstone, on rare visits to London, flitted about the precincts of the House of Commons, silent, unnoticing, and unnoticed, — a sort of wraith of his brother.

There was another brother, who lived in Liverpool, and maintained the commercial relations of the Gladstone family. This was Robertson, a man who, though he took a fair share of the work of local government in the town, did not aspire to deal with affairs outside the limits of the borough. There was an occasion, not likely to be forgotten by Mr. Gladstone's detractors, when Robertson, moved with honest indignation and fraternal love, employed a

maladroit trope when discussing the public position of his brother. After this he was confirmed in his natural inclination to retirement from participation in political affairs and, in 1875 there passed away from human sight for all time the colossal burly figure which, with hands hidden in stupendous waistcoat pockets, long strode the streets of Liverpool.

We have hardly got William Ewart Gladstone out of petticoats yet, but having gone thus far in detailed description of his family belongings, it may be convenient finally to dispose of this branch of the subject. In 1839 he married Miss Catherine Glynne, daughter of Sir Stephen Glynne, of Hawarden Castle, Flintshire, which became in time the most familiar postal address in the world. He had eight children. One, the second daughter, died in 1850. His eldest daughter is married to the head-master of Wellington College, a younger one to the Rev. Mr. Drew. A third, unmarried, is Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge.

Of his four sons the eldest, William Henry, sat in one House of Commons as Member for Whitby, in another representing East Worcestershire. A man of gentle and retiring disposition, he did not take kindly to the turmoil of politics, and when opportunity presented itself, gratefully withdrew. The second son is Rector of Hawarden. In 1875 the torrent of abuse to which Mr. Gladstone was subjected took, in a somewhat obscure London weekly paper, the line of accusation that the ex-Premier had

presented his son, ordained in 1870, to one of the richest and easiest livings of the Church. This was a statement that might well have been passed over in silence. It touched Mr. Gladstone to the quick. He wrote: "This easy living entailed the charge of 8,000 people scattered over 17,000 acres, and fast increasing in number. The living is not in the gift of the Crown. I did not present him to the living or recommend him to be presented. He was not ordained in 1870. My relations," he proudly and truthfully added, "have no special cause to thank me for any advice given by me to the Sovereign in the matter of Church patronage."

His third son, Henry, followed the early family traditions by entering upon commercial pursuits, spending some years in India. He married the daughter of Lord Rendel, and still stands apart from politics. The only born politician among the sons is the youngest. Mr. Herbert Gladstone made his first appearance in the political arena by gallantly contesting Middlesex in April, 1880. Defeated there, he was returned for Leeds two months later, and still represents a Leeds Division in the House of Commons. For a while he acted as Private Secretary to his father the Premier, though he received no salary. He became in succession a Lord of the Treasury and Financial Secretary to the War Office, the Secretaryship to the Home Office being the highest post to which his omnipotent father promoted him. Upon Mr. Gladstone's retirement in 1894,

colleagues who had long worked with Mr. Herbert Gladstone made haste to do him fuller justice, promoting him to the position of First Commissioner of Works.

A singularly modest record this of the family of an illustrious statesman, four times Chief Minister of a nation whose wealth is illimitable, whose power reaches to the ends of the earth. We are, happily, so accustomed in England to find our statesmen free from the charge of nepotism, that we take Mr. Gladstone's innocence as a matter of course. But few more suggestive chapters in his history could be written than that which shows the son of a man, who has made many bishops, rector of the family parish in Flintshire; one of his daughters married to a schoolmaster; a second herself a schoolmistress, whilst another of his sons long sat at an office desk.

When not in London engaged in Ministerial or political business Mr. Gladstone has dwelt among his own people in his Flintshire home. Of Hawarden Castle, its history and its belongings, I may quote further from an interesting communication addressed to me in 1881 by the late Mr. W. H. Gladstone: —

The estate of Hawarden was purchased by Serjeant Glynne from the agents of Sequestration after the execution of James Earl of Derby in 1651. It came first into the Stanley family in 1443, when it was granted by Henry VI. to Sir Thomas Stanley, Comp-

troller of his Household. This grant was recalled in 1450, but in 1454 it was restored to Sir Thomas, afterwards Lord Stanley. After his death it descended to his second wife, Margaret Countess of Richmond; on whose decease it returned to Thomas Earl of Derby, and remained in that family till 1651.

On the Restoration, when the Commons rejected the Bill for restoring the estates of those lords which had been alienated in the late usurpation, Charles Earl of Derby compounded with Serjeant Glynne for the property of Hawarden and granted it to him and his heirs.

The old Castle was possessed by the Parliament in 1643, being betrayed to Sir William Brereton, but was besieged soon after by the Royalists, and surrendered to Sir Michael Earnley, December 5th, 1643. The Royalists held it till 1645, when it was taken by General Mytton. It was soon after dismantled, and its further destruction effected by its owner, Sir William Glynne, in 1665.

There is no tradition of the Earls of Derby making the Castle their residence subsequent to the death of the Countess of Richmond; but it is certain that it was not rendered untenable till dismantled by final order of the Parliament in 1647.

The Glynne family were first heard of at Glyn Llyvon, in Carnarvonshire, in 1567. A knighthood was conferred on Sir William, father of Serjeant, afterwards Chief Justice, Glynne. Sir William,

son of the Chief Justice (who also sat in Parliament for Carnarvonshire in 1660), was created a Baronet in 1661, during his father's lifetime. About this date the family became connected with Oxfordshire, and did not reside at Hawarden till 1727, when Sir Stephen, second Baronet, built a house there. A new one was, however, built shortly after, in 1752, by Sir John Glynne, who, by an alliance with the family of Ravenscroft, acquired the adjoining property of Broadlane. This house, then called Broadlane House, is the kernel of the present residence known as Hawarden Castle. Sir John Glynne (sixth Baronet) applied himself to improving and developing the property on a large scale by inclosing, draining, and planting; and under him the estate grew to its present aspect and dimensions. (The park contains some 200 acres; the plantations cover about 500. The whole estate is upwards of 7,000.) In 1809 the house, built of brick, was much enlarged and cased in stone in the castellated style, and under the name it now bears. Further improvements were made by the late Sir Stephen Glynne in 1831. The new block, however, containing Mr. Gladstone's study, was not added till 1864.

Mr. Gladstone's room has three windows and two fireplaces and is completely lined with bookcases. There are three writing-tables in it. The first Mr. Gladstone uses for political, the second for literary work (Homeric and other) when engaged upon such. The third is occupied by Mrs. Gladstone. The room

has busts and other likenesses of Sidney Herbert, Duke of Newcastle, Tennyson, Canning, Cobden, Homer, and others. In a corner may be seen a specimen of an axe from Nottingham, the blade of which is singularly long and narrow, and contrasts strongly with the American pattern, to which Mr. Gladstone is much addicted.

Mr. Gladstone sold his collections of china and pictures in 1874, retaining, however, those of ivories and antique jewels, exhibited at South Kensington and elsewhere.

His library contains over 10,000 volumes, and is very rich in theology. Separate departments are assigned in it to Homer, Shakespeare, and Dante.

Chief portraits in the house are those of Sir Kenelm Digby, by Vandyck, an ancestor of Honora Conway, Sir John Glynne's wife; Lady Lucy Stanley, daughter of Thomas Earl of Northumberland, mother to Sir K. Digby's wife; Jane Warburton, afterwards Duchess of Argyll, great-granddaughter to Chief Justice Glynne; Sir William Glynne, first Baronet, ascribed to Sir Peter Lely; Chief Justice Glynne as a young man, and another in his judicial robes; Lady Sandys, grandmother to Sir William Glynne's wife; Lady Wheler, daughter of Sir Stephen Glynne; Sir John Glynne with Honora Conway his wife, holding a drawing of the new house at Broadlane; Sir Robert Williams, of Penrhyn, who married a daughter of the Chief Justice; Catherine Grenville, afterwards Lady Braybrooke and mother of Lady Glynne; Mrs. Glad-

stone, by Saye; Lady Lyttelton, by Saye; the late Sir Stephen, by Roden; Mr. Gladstone's own portrait, by W. B. Richmond; Viscountess Vane, *née* Hawes; Charles I., Henrietta Maria his Queen, and Charles II., copies from Vandyck; and several others, one attributed to Gainsborough. There are busts of Pitt, Sir John Glynne, Rev. Henry Glynne, Mrs. Gladstone, Mr. Gladstone by Marochetti, and other statuary.

The late Sir Stephen left a good topographical library, and himself compiled an account of nearly all the old parish churches in the kingdom. He died a bachelor, much beloved and lamented, in 1874.

CHAPTER III.

MEMBER FOR NEWARK.

Mr. Gladstone had not reached his twelfth birthday when he arrived at Eton. The date of his entry in the school-books is September, 1821. Fifty-seven years later he returned to Eton and lectured to the newer boys. "My attachment to Eton," he told them, "increases with the lapse of years. It is the Queen of Schools." Among his contemporaries was that Selwyn, afterward Bishop of Lichfield and missionary in New Zealand, to whose splendid life his old schoolfellow long time later found occasion to pay a glowing tribute. Mackworth Praed, Chauncey Hare Townshend, F. H. Doyle, and A. H. Hallam were also at Eton with Mr. Gladstone.

The lad learned all that was to be learned in the Eton of those days. School studies left him many spare hours, and his restless energy found more or less adequate channels of escape in literature. He started a College journal, the *Eton Miscellany*, and chiefly wrote it himself. He was equal to either prose or verse, embarking, *inter alia*, upon a tremendous poem laudatory of Richard Cœur de Lion. There are some lines in this school-boy flight which, without violence, might be adapted to Mr. Gladstone's out-

break, at the time of the Bulgarian Atrocities, from a briefly enforced state of quietude. "Who foremost now?" the jacketed small boy asks in this tremendous poem —

> Who foremost now the deadly spear to dart,
> And strike the jav'lin to the Moslem's heart;
> Who foremost now to climb the 'leaguered wall,
> The first to triumph or the first to fall?

But the young poet of this date had no prophetic vision of the future. His thoughts were full of Richard "stalking along the blood-dyed plain" and "bathing his hands in Moslem blood."

The youth left Eton in December, 1827, and after studying for six months with Dr. Turner, afterward Bishop of Calcutta, went to Christ Church, Oxford. How well he worked is evidenced by the fact that, going up for examination in 1831, he gained the highest honors of the University, graduating Double First.

In the course of time he came to represent his Alma Mater in the House of Commons, in time to be dismissed peremptorily, if not with ignominy. It was characteristic of him that, going down to Manchester just after his defeat at Oxford, he made the earliest use of his unmuzzled opportunities to sing the praises of Oxford. "I have," he said, "loved the University of Oxford with a deep and passionate love; and so I shall love it to the end. If my affection is of the smallest advantage to that great, that ancient, that noble institution, that advantage, such as it is, and it is most insignificant, Oxford will possess as long as I live."

Newman was a great force at Oxford when the future member for the University was undergraduate. "At that time," Mr. Gladstone says, "before the era of the controversies with which he is connected, Newman, with his deep piety and his remarkable gifts of mind, was a great object of interest. He was looked upon rather with prejudice as what is termed a Low Churchman, but was very much respected for his character and his known ability. He was then the Vicar of St. Mary's at Oxford, and used to preach there. Without ostentation or effort, by simple excellence, he was constantly drawing undergraduates more and more around him. Newman's manner in the pulpit was one about which, if you considered it in its separate parts, you would arrive at very unsatisfactory conclusions. There was not very much change in the inflection of the voice; action there was none. His sermons were read, and his eyes were always on his book. All that, it may be said, is against the efficacy of preaching. But taking the man as a whole, there was a stamp and seal upon him. There was a solemn music and sweetness in the tone. There was a completeness in the figure, taken together with the tone and with the manner, which made even his delivery, such as I have described it, and though exclusively with written sermons, singularly attractive."

Naturally Mr. Gladstone was attracted during his residence in the University by the opportunities of debate offered by the Oxford Union, in which he rapidly rose to the proud position of president. The

outer world at this time was moved by the passion of Parliamentary Reform. Lord John Russell had just brought forward in the House of Commons the first Ministerial Measure of Reform. The Oxford Union had, of course, something to say on this momentous question, and it is interesting to find in the minutes of the Club an amendment, moved by William Ewart Gladstone, to the effect that "The Ministry has unwisely introduced and most unscrupulously forwarded a measure which threatens not only to change our form of government, but ultimately to break up the very foundation of social order, as well as materially to forward the views of those who are pursuing this project throughout the civilized world."

Mr. Gladstone was in Italy when the summons came in obedience to which he placed his foot on the first rung of the ladder of fame. It was the year 1832. The Reform Bill had just been passed, and the United Kingdom was in the throes of expectation as to what might follow on the summoning of the first Reformed Parliament. It was the Duke of Newcastle, registered owner of the borough of Newark, who was instrumental in bringing Mr. Gladstone into the House of Commons. In a conversation which took place upon the hustings on the day of nomination, there is something eminently characteristic of Mr. Gladstone as he was known to a later generation.

A matter-of-fact elector, who probably did not rent his house or shop from the Duke, asked the

young candidate "Whether he was not the Duke of Newcastle's nominee?" This was an exceedingly embarrassing question. If the candidate said "No," he would be convicted, within every man's knowledge, of a falsehood. If he said "Yes," what a farce was this nomination and bustle at the poll! But Mr. Gladstone, though an exceedingly young bird at this date, was not to be caught by chaff. He asked the honorable elector to do him the favor of defining the term nominee. The unwary elector fell into the trap, and Mr. Gladstone was, of course, able to declare that in such a sense he was *not* the Duke's nominee. As a matter of fact he certainly was, and the preponderance of the Duke's influence was indicated by his being returned at the head of the poll.

Mr. Gladstone's address to the electors of Newark has peculiar value as indicating precisely the political platform from which the great social, religious, and political Liberator sprung. It is also interesting as showing how this marvellously subtle mind is able to make the worse appear the better reason, and how ingeniously he argues to convince the electors of Newark and himself. The document, dated 9th October, 1831, runs thus: —

"Having now completed my canvass, I think it my duty as well to remind you of the principles on which I have solicited your votes, as freely to assure my friends that its result has placed my success beyond a doubt. I have not requested your favor on the ground of adherence to the opinions of any man

or party, further than such adherence can be fairly understood, from the conviction I have not hesitated to avow, that we must watch and resist that uninquiring and undiscriminating desire for change among us, which threatens to produce, along with partial good, a melancholy preponderance of mischief — which I am persuaded would aggravate beyond computation the deep-seated evils of our social state, and the heavy burdens of our industrial classes — which by disturbing our peace, destroys confidence, and strikes at the root of prosperity. Thus it has done already; and thus we must therefore believe it will do. For the mitigation of those evils we must, I think, look not only to particular measures, but to the restoration of sounder general principles. I mean especially that principle on which alone the incorporation of Religion with the State, in our Constitution, can be defended; that the duties of governors are strictly and peculiarly religious, and that legislatures, like individuals, are bound to carry throughout their acts the spirit of the high truths they have acknowledged. Principles are now arrayed against our institutions, and not by truckling nor by temporizing — not by oppression or corruption — but by principles they must be met. Among their first results should be a sedulous and special attention to the interests of the poor, founded upon the rule that those who are the least able to take care of themselves should be most regarded by others. Particularly it is a duty to endeavor by

every means that labor may receive adequate remuneration; which, unhappily, among several classes of our fellow-countrymen, is not now the case. Whatever measures, therefore, whether by correction of the poor laws, allotment of cottage ground, or otherwise, tend to promote this object, I deem entitled to the warmest support, with all such as are calculated to revive sound moral conduct in any class of society. I proceed to the momentous question of slavery, which I have found entertained among you in that candid and temperate spirit which alone befits its nature, or promises to remove its difficulties. If I have not recognized the right of an irresponsible society to interpose between me and the electors, it has not been from any disrespect to its members, nor from unwillingness to answer theirs (*sic*) or any other questions on which the electors may desire to know my views. Tô the esteemed secretary of the society I submitted my reasons for silence; and I made a point of stating these views to him, in his character of a voter. As regards the abstract lawfulness of slavery, I acknowledge it simply as importing the right of one man to the labour of another; and I rest it upon the fact that Scripture, the paramount authority upon such a point, gives directions to the persons standing in the relation of master to slave for their conduct in the relation; whereas, were the matter absolutely and necessarily sinful, it would not regulate the manner. Assuming sin as the cause of degradation, it strives, and strives most

effectually, to cure the latter by extirpating the former. We are agreed that both the physical and the moral bondage of the slave are to be abolished. The question is as to the order, and the order only; now Scripture attacks the moral evil before the temporal one, and the temporal through the moral one, and I am content with the order which Scripture has established. To this end I desire to see immediately set on foot, by impartial and sovereign authority, a universal and efficient system of Christian instruction, not intended to resist designs of individual piety and wisdom, for the religious improvement of the negroes, but to do thoroughly what they can only do partially. As regards immediate emancipation, whether with or without compensation, there are several minor reasons against it; but that which weighs with me is, that it would, I much fear, exchange evils now affecting the negro for others which are weightier — for a relapse into deeper debasement, if not for bloodshed and internal war. Let fitness be made a condition for emancipation; and let us strive to bring him to that fitness by the shortest possible course. Let him enjoy the means of earning his freedom through honest, industrious habits; thus the same instruments which attain his liberty shall likewise render him competent to use it; and thus I earnestly trust without risk of blood, without violation of property, with unimpaired benefit to the negro, and with the utmost speed which prudence will admit we shall arrive at that exceed-

ingly desirable consummation, the utter extinction of Slavery. And now, gentlemen, as regards the enthusiasm with which you have rallied round your ancient flag, and welcomed the humble representative of those principles whose emblem it is, I trust that neither the lapse of time nor the seductions of prosperity can efface it from my memory. To my opponents my acknowledgments are due for the good-humor and kindness with which they have received me; and while I would thank my friends for their zealous and unwearied exertions in my favor, I briefly, but emphatically, assure them that if promises be an adequate foundation of confidence, or experience a reasonable ground of calculation, our victory is sure."

Mr. Gladstone's maiden speech in the House of Commons was made in defence of the domestic institution of slavery. It was a burning question at the time he entered Parliament, and his views were naturally tinged by the circumstance that his father owned many slaves in Demerara. To denounce the institution of slavery was to impugn the humanity of his father. In fact, a personal reference had been made to Mr. John Gladstone in the course of the debate on the abolition of slavery. We next find him appearing as the advocate of that estimable body of politicians, the Freemen of Liverpool, who were threatened with extinction consequent upon a too open exercise of their alleged right to do what they liked with their own — that is to say, to get as much

as possible for their votes. We further find this uncompromising young Tory resisting an attempt to deal with the temporalities of the Church of Ireland and opposing Mr. Hume in his effort to open the Universities to Nonconformists.

Sir Robert Peel had taken note of the young member for Newark, and when, in the last days of 1834, he undertook to form a Ministry in succession to that of Lord Melbourne, he offered Mr. Gladstone the post of Junior Lord of the Treasury. This was a tolerable success for a young man in the twenty-fifth year of his age, and at the close of his second Parliamentary Session. But it was the prelude to even more rapid advancement. Parliament had scarcely met for the Session of 1835, when he was installed in the office of Under-Secretary for the Colonies.

Here is a charming leaf of autobiography contributed by Mr. Gladstone in the course of a letter prefacing a Life of the Earl of Aberdeen: "On an evening in the month of January, 1835, I was sent for by Sir Robert Peel, and received from him the offer, which I accepted, of the Under-Secretaryship of the Colonies. From him I went on to Lord Aberdeen, who was thus to be, in official home-talk, my master. I may confess that I went in fear and trembling. I knew Lord Aberdeen only by public rumor. Distinction of itself, naturally and properly, rather alarms the young. I had heard of his high character; but I had also heard of him as a man of

cold manners, close and even haughty reserve. It was dusk when I entered his room, — the one on the first floor, with the bow-window looking to the Park, — so that I saw his figure rather than his countenance. I do not recollect the matter of the conversation; but I well remember that, before I had been three minutes with him, all my apprehensions had melted away like snow in the sun. I came away from that interview, conscious indeed — as who could fail to be conscious? — of his dignity, but of a dignity so tempered by a peculiar purity and gentleness, and so associated with impressions of his kindness, and even friendship, that I believe I felt more about the wonder of his being at that time so misunderstood by the outer world, than about the new duties and responsibilities of my new office."

The young Minister lost no time in bringing in his first Bill, a measure designed to improve the condition of passengers in merchant vessels. The Ministry was, however, too short-lived for this humble effort to be added to the accomplishments of the statute-book. Mr. Gladstone's young hopes received a temporary blow from contact with the question of the Irish Church, which exercised so important an influence on later stages of his career. It was on a resolution containing the nucleus of the Irish Church Bill of 1869 that the first Ministry of which he formed a member was defeated, and forced to resign.

For the next five or six years Mr. Gladstone remained in opposition with his great chief. But

though out of office he was not idle. He spoke frequently in debates, and the growth of his position in the country is testified to by the fact that in 1837, being in his twenty-eighth year, he was invited to stand as the Tory candidate for Manchester. He declined the proposal, but was nevertheless run, and polled a considerable number of votes. It was at this period of his career that Lord Macaulay described him in a famous sentence as "a young man of unblemished character, and of distinguished Parliamentary talents, the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories who follow reluctantly and mutinously a leader whose experience and eloquence are indispensable to them, but whose cautious temper and moderate opinions they abhor." This was, as every one knows, written *apropos* of Mr. Gladstone's essay on "The State in its Relations with the Church;" a work the theory of which Macaulay has described as based upon the proposition that the propagation of religious truth is one of the chief ends of government.

This pious political tract gave great joy to Oxford, to which "fountain of blessings spiritual, social, and intellectual," it was dedicated. Oxford did not forget the compliment when, eight years later, a change in the political opinions of the member for Newark necessitated his looking out for another seat. In other directions than that of literature and the Church, the rising hope of the stern, unbending Tories justified the description of the Edinburgh

reviewer. We find him at this period lending the weight of his eloquence and the force of his genius to stopping the progress of Reform in whatever direction it was urged. He opposed a Ministerial scheme for dealing with the Church rates in deference to the views of Dissenters. He passionately defended negro apprenticeship, the last vestige of slavery permitted in the West Indies. He opposed a scheme of national education in which, as Lord Morpeth put it, "it was declared to be the duty of the State to provide education for Dissenters so long as it fingered their gold," and he fought hard in the long battle against the Bill designed to remove the civil disabilities of Jews. He was always thorough, and being, in these days of partially developed intelligence, a Tory, he battled under the Tory flag with the same impetuous vigor as in fuller manhood he brought to the effort in pulling it down.

CHAPTER IV.

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

In 1841 Sir Robert Peel was back in power, bringing with him the "young man of unblemished character," whom Lord Macaulay, perhaps not altogether without spite, spoke of as a rival, but in whom the large-minded statesman saw nothing but a promising pupil and friend. To Sir Robert Peel Mr. Gladstone had transferred some of that enthusiastic homage he had in boyhood paid to Canning. "It is," he said, speaking at Manchester three years after the death of his old chief, "easy to enumerate many characteristics of the greatness of Sir Robert Peel. It is easy to speak of his ability, of his sagacity, of his indefatigable industry. But there was something yet more admirable than the immense intellectual endowments with which it had pleased the Almighty to gift him, and that was his sense of public virtue, it was his purity of conscience, it was his determination to follow the public good, it was that disposition in him which, when he had to choose between personal ease and enjoyment, or again, on the other hand, between political power and distinction and what he knew to be the welfare of the nation, his choice was made at once. When his choice was made no man ever saw him hesitate, no man ever

saw him hold back from that which was necessary to give it effect."

Returning to the subject, speaking at Sunderland in 1862, Mr. Gladstone said: "No lapse of time can ever efface from the recollection of his countrymen the service he performed, and the character by which those services were illustrated and adorned. No recollection of public life can ever be dearer to me than to have been associated with him, and to have had a share in giving effect to his convictions during the course of now more than twenty years. To him I owe it that my mind was first directed to those economical and commercial questions the disposal and solution of which will fill so large and honorable a page in the history of the present age. And of him I will venture to say that, great as were his intellectual qualities, comprehensive and far-sighted as were his views, distinguished as were the firmness and the courage with which he sustained them, not even those intellectual qualities were more remarkable in the eyes of those to whom he was intimately known than what I will call the splendor and the purity of his public virtues."

To the Parliament summoned in 1841 Mr. Gladstone was again returned as member for Newark, this time as the colleague of Lord John Manners. In the Ministry he held two offices, that of Master of the Mint and Vice-President of the Board of Trade.

In the memorials of Charlotte Williams Wynn, we find a remark on this circumstance which throws a strong side-light on the public recognition of Mr.

Gladstone's character at this epoch. Writing to Baron Varnhagen von Ense, under date "London 18th November, 1841," Miss Williams Wynn reports: "They say Mr. Gladstone has been given two offices in order, if possible, to keep him quiet, and by giving him too much to do, to prevent him from troubling his head about the Church. But I know it will be in vain, for, to a speculative mind like his, theology is a far more inviting and extensive field than any offered by the Board of Trade."

This is a shrewd estimation of character, the full accomplishment of which the charming letter-writer would have witnessed had she lived five years longer, and seen Mr. Gladstone, just freed from the Imperial cares of office, gleefully buckle on his armor to do battle with the Pope for the vanquishing of the Vatican. In the meantime he found plenty to do in his dual office.

The Session of 1842 was the one which saw Sir Robert Peel bring in his new sliding scale of Corn Duties — a slide which swiftly led to the total abolition of the impost. Closely connected with the comprehensive Free Trade policy into which the Premier was drifting was the Revision of the Tariff, a herculean task, peculiarly adapted to the genius of Mr. Gladstone. This was his opportunity for bringing into play that statesmanlike view of a wide field, combined with that consummate mastery of details, which subsequently marked his budgets. His speeches had already established for him the position of a debater,

and even of an orator. His Tariffs Bill and his conduct in Committee stamped him as a statesman.

In the following year (1843) he became head of his department, and as President of the Board of Trade carried an important Bill, controlling the then young domestic institution of railways. Since the year 1843 Mr. Gladstone has done so much for the people that his comparatively minor achievements are lost sight of. It is nevertheless interesting to recall the fact that he was the author of the Parliamentary train which travels the full length of all lines twice a day at a fare of one penny a mile — perhaps a more useful work than his essay on "The State in its Relations with the Church," or even his pamphlet on "Vaticanism."

In 1845 the Government, having determined to bring in a Bill dealing with Maynooth College in a way that did not satisfy Mr. Gladstone's sound Church principles, he resigned, checking for a moment his brilliant advance. But he was not a man whom Sir Robert Peel could long spare from his side. Early next year he returned to the Ministry as Secretary of State for the Colonies, and what was even more important, pledged to go the full length of Sir Robert Peel's Free Trade policy, which now reached the point of the abolition of the Corn Laws. This progress, carrying him far beyond the halting steps of the Duke of Newcastle, necessitated resignation of his seat for Newark. Thereafter, for the whole of this important Session, and during the greater part of

the next, he remained without a seat. When he returned as member for Oxford the Corn Law Repeal Act was passed; Sir Robert Peel, having done his work, was relegated to the Opposition benches, and the Whigs had a lease of power.

In 1850 Sir Robert Peel died, and it seemed to some of those who had lived and worked with this supreme man that any subsequent attempts to form a good Government for England would be hopeless. The turbulent individuality of some of his lieutenants might, for a time, be merged in his stronger will and more transcendent power. But he gone, who was to lead men like Mr. Gladstone, Sir James Graham, and Sidney Herbert? They would belong to neither party, and standing aloof, their ability acknowledged, and their motives above suspicion, they probably exercised more influence on the House of Commons than either group on the two front benches. In the winter of this year Mr. Gladstone, going to Naples for a holiday, saw something of the condition of prison life under that enlightened monarch, Ferdinand II. Throwing himself with his accustomed energy into this cause, he, through the medium of letters addressed to Lord Aberdeen, then Premier, succeeded in arousing not only in England, but throughout Europe, a storm of indignation against what the then editor of the faithful *Univers* called "le plus digne et le meilleur des Rois." The immediate result of this chivalrous advocacy was not commensurate with the storm it aroused. But it bore fruit when Garibaldi

and a free people marched into Naples, and King Bomba, his priests, his women, and his Court ran out.

If Mr. Gladstone had died before 1853 he would have been accounted a brilliant politician cut off before the ripeness of years had brought him fulness of opportunity. He had done great things, but their character was rather critical than constructive. He had spoken brilliantly, but had not achieved anything likely to secure him permanent fame. In 1853 the square peg was happily thrust into the square hole, and Mr. Gladstone became Chancellor of the Exchequer. His remarkable ability for dealing with figures, for evolving a comprehensive scheme out of a multiplicity of details, had been shown in the Tariffs Bill already alluded to. In 1852 he had disclosed in stronger light his mastery over the science of National Finance.

At this epoch Lord Derby was Premier and Mr. Disraeli Chancellor of the Exchequer. The latter had introduced his first budget in an elaborate speech, extending over five hours and a quarter. Unless it greatly differed from all his orations of similar proportions it must have been intolerably heavy. To one listener, however, it possessed a keen and enthralling interest. Mr. Gladstone had not, up to this period, entered upon that attitude of personal, sometimes acrid, antagonism with Mr. Disraeli which subsequent events and relative positions created. He had answered and been answered by him in the course of debate. But the House and the country had not as

yet come to look with keen interest for what might follow upon a conflict between these two men, who had no possession in common except genius. Circumstances were rapidly tending toward the creation of the condition of affairs the House of Commons and the country were long familiar with. Mr. Gladstone could never forgive Mr. Disraeli's bitter attacks on his old friend and master, Sir Robert Peel, and had loudly cheered Sidney Herbert when, in a moment of passionate indignation, that gentleman had pointed to the Treasury Bench, where now prosperously sat the detractor of the great Free-Trader, and asked the House to behold in him "a spectacle of humiliation."

When Mr. Disraeli essayed to deal with finance, Mr. Gladstone with fierce delight sprang upon him, gripping him so sorely that he made an end of him, his budget, and the Ministry of which he was the prop. Lord Derby resigned, and Lord Aberdeen, being called upon to form a Ministry, invited Mr. Gladstone to take the office out of which he had driven Mr. Disraeli. His acceptance of the offer did not of course finally mark his passage across the great gulf which separates Toryism from Liberalism. Lord Aberdeen was at this epoch far removed from what we in these days should call a Liberal. Still, he was certainly not a Tory — was, indeed, at the other end of the stick, inasmuch as the Tories being out, he was called upon to succeed them, and had for colleague Lord John Russell.

Mr. Gladstone's conversion to Liberalism had been

slow but certain. While yet a member of the avowedly Conservative Government of Sir Robert Peel, he was gradually seeing light. When the shepherd died, and the fold was broken up, he declined overtures made to him by Lord Derby to join the Ministry formed in 1852, nominally as successor to the heritage of Sir Robert Peel. He long stood aloof from both parties. Probably the fact that Mr. Disraeli had come to be accepted as a high priest to Toryism added the last impulse to his conviction that Toryism was a thing not to be desired or encouraged. Accordingly, he formally ranged himself in the Liberal ranks.

On the 18th of April, 1853, he delivered the first of what has proved to be a long series of budget speeches unsurpassed in Parliamentary history. There are some members in the present House of Commons who have a vivid recollection of the occasion. Expectation stood on tiptoe. The House was crowded in every part, and it remained crowded and tireless, while for the space of five hours Mr. Gladstone poured forth a flood of oratory which made arithmetic astonishingly easy, and gave an unaccustomed grace to statistics. Merely as an oratorical display, the speech was a rare treat to the crowded assembly that heard it, and to the innumerable company which some hours later read it. But the form was rendered doubly enchanting by the substance. It was clear that Mr. Gladstone could not only adorn the exposition of finance with the glamour of oratory,

but could control the developments of finance with a master-hand.

His scheme was a bold one. The young and untried Chancellor of the Exchequer found himself with a surplus of something over three-quarters of a million. This was not much. But it was enough to make things pleasant in one or two influential quarters, and he might have hoped for a fuller purse next year. To have taken this course, to have dribbled away the surplus, practically to have left matters where they stood, would, moreover, have saved him an infinitude of trouble, and relieved him from a tremendous risk. Scorning these considerations, plunging into the troubled sea with the confident daring of genius, he positively increased taxation, chiefly by manipulation of the Income Tax, and was thereby enabled, in a wholesale manner that seems scarcely less than magical, to reduce or absolutely abolish the duties on nearly three hundred articles of commerce in daily use. The secret of the financier's necromancy lay in that sound principle which he may be said to have inaugurated in British finance, and under the extended application of which trade and commerce have advanced by leaps and bounds. He reckoned upon that property in national finance known as the "elasticity of revenue," now habitually, as a matter of ordinary calculation, counted upon to make good deficiencies immediately accruing upon reduction of taxation. There is nothing remarkable in the adoption of this principle to-day, any more than there

is in the application of a lighted match to a gas-burner when we want light in a darkened room. But in 1853 the experiment was as novel, and its results as surprising, as would have been the introduction of a blazing gas-chandelier in the House of Commons when William Pitt was explaining his budget of 1783.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing in connection with Mr. Gladstone's first budget was the confidence with which its predictions were accepted. Everywhere it was applauded, and though Mr. Disraeli, as Leader of the Opposition, supported an amendment against it, his action was regarded merely as a matter of course. Equally a matter of course the budget resolutions were approved, and the beneficial reign of sound finance, inspired by rare genius and directed by superlative energy, forthwith commenced.

Mr. Gladstone continued to be the main strength of the Aberdeen Ministry, and in his capacity as Chancellor of the Exchequer he financed the Crimean War. In 1855, when the coalition fell to pieces, and Lord Palmerston undertook to construct a Government out of the fragments, Mr. Gladstone continued to hold his office — promptly resigning it when he found the patriotic Mr. Roebuck's motion, for what was known as "The Sebastopol Committee," was not to be withstood by the Cabinet. He remained out of office for some years following, his leisure intermitted by work that would have sufficed other men for a life's labor. It was during this

period he completed and published his "Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age." He fulfilled more than the average duties of a Member of Parliament, superadding a special mission to the Ionian Islands, undertaken in 1858 at the request of Lord Derby, then Premier. Early in 1859 the brief administration of Lord Derby, in which Mr. Disraeli had for the second time held the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, came to an end. Mr. Gladstone again joined the Ministry formed by Lord Palmerston, which lasted as long as that Premier's life.

During the long reign of Lord Palmerston the progress of politics attuned itself to the beat of the pulse of the aged Premier. There were wars abroad, but peace and prosperity at home, and Mr. Gladstone was able to carry out the scheme of bold, far-seeing finance the Crimean War had interrupted five years earlier. The year 1860 saw the completion of the Commercial Treaty with France; a fruitful tree, which Mr. Cobden and Napoleon III. planted, and which Mr. Gladstone watered. This same year was the last of the Paper Duty, the abolition of which in 1861 was a final stroke in that labor for the freedom of the press and the extension of intelligence, begun when, in an earlier budget, he had made an end of the Stamp Duty.

CHAPTER V.

"UNMUZZLED."

THE long Parliament of Lord Palmerston came to an end on the 6th of July, 1865. There was no particular reason why it should have been prorogued then, rather than a month or six months later, for it had completed only 122 days of its seventh year. But at that time Ministers took a view of the possible length of Parliaments which finds an interesting illustration in an incidental reference made by Mr. Gladstone in his budget speech of 1865. Reciting the several claims the existing Parliament had upon the attention of history, he added, "lastly, it has enjoyed the distinction that, although no Parliament ever completes the full term of its legal existence, yet this is the seventh time you have been called upon to make provision for the financial exigencies of the country."

The result of the general election was most important to Mr. Gladstone, and to the nation in whose life he had become an important factor. Offering himself for re-election at Oxford, he was rejected in favor of Mr. Gathorne Hardy, afterwards Lord Cranbrook, and some time Secretary of State for India. This event created a profound sensation, no authority being more deeply moved than *The Times*.

It is interesting at this time of day to quote *The Times* of 1865 upon Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Gathorne Hardy: "The enemies of the University," it was written in this impartial and important journal, "will make the most of her disgrace. It has hitherto been supposed that a learned constituency was to some extent exempt from the vulgar motives of party spirit, and capable of forming a higher estimate of statesmanship than common tradesmen or tenant-farmers. It will now stand on record that they have deliberately sacrificed a representative who combined the very highest qualifications, moral and intellectual, for an academical seat, to party-spirit, and party-spirit alone. . . . Henceforth Mr. Gladstone will belong to the country, but no longer to the University."

Great Britain, in one geographical section or other, has always taken care that it shall not be deprived of the advantage of Mr. Gladstone's presence in its Parliament. On this occasion it was South Lancashire which, perceiving his peril at Oxford, voluntarily offered to secure him a seat. From the University he hastened to the manufacturing town, and stood before the men of Manchester, as he said, "unmuzzled." Even the dullest politicians recognized the significance of the events so aptly described in this memorable phrase. As long as Mr. Gladstone was politically associated with Oxford, the Alma Mater he loved with changeless affection, there was a possibility that he might successfully resist the silent

forces leading him to a more uncompromising Liberalism. When Oxford snapped the chain he was free to go whither he listed. The end would, doubtless, inevitably have arrived. He would have retired from Oxford because he was bent upon freeing the Irish Church, just as in an earlier stage of his career he had withdrawn from Newark because he was about to join in an assault on Protection. Sooner or later the unmuzzling must have been accomplished. Oxford elected to make it sooner by several years.

The unmuzzling process was completed by an event which made memorable the autumn of 1865. Lord Palmerston died, and the pent-up flood of Liberal life rushed downward like a cataract. In a happy phrase Dean Church described Palmerston in his closing years as "the great-grandpapa to the English political world, whose age was to be respected." Grandpapa's eyes reverentially closed, the time for coalitions and temporizing was past. Earl Russell succeeded as Premier, and Mr. Gladstone was named Leader of the House of Commons, still holding the Ministerial office of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

It was felt that the hour had come for the introduction of a Reform Bill, and in Earl Russell the man was naturally found. The statesman who had taken a leading part in the Reform campaign of 1832 was largely responsible for the measure of 1866. But it happened that to Mr. Gladstone, as Leader of the House of Commons, fell the task of introducing the Bill, and bearing the brunt of the battle that

raged around it. There were giants in those days, and the Parliamentary debates of the Session of 1866 stand out in the pages of Hansard, by reason of their brilliancy and fire. Mr. Disraeli led the united body of the Conservatives in an attack upon a Bill which they regarded with holy horror, as a long advance on the way to the establishment of democracy.

But the most dangerous foes of the Liberal party were to be found within its own household. This was the year in which Mr. Lowe, fresh from the insufficient glories of a Colonial Legislature, made his mark in the House of Commons. The terror of the uttermost Tory was far exceeded by the apprehension with which he regarded this Bill. Speaking of Mr. Gladstone, and contemplating the probability of the Bill being carried, he exclaimed: "I court not a single leaf of the laurels that may encircle his brow. I do not envy him his triumph. His be the glory of carrying the Bill, mine of having to the utmost of my poor ability resisted it."

It was in this year that the Cave of Adullam was formed, and there was created that immortal "party of two [Mr. Horsman and Mr. Lowe], like the Scotch terrier that was so covered with hair you could not tell which was the head and which the tail." The debate on the second reading of the Bill lasted several days. On the eve of the division it fell to Mr. Gladstone's lot to wind up the debate, which he did in a speech containing perhaps absolutely the finest per-

oration of the many that sparkle in the train of the infinitude of his orations.

"You cannot fight against the future," he said, turning sharp upon the Opposition, and speaking in a voice where pathos struggled with exultation for the mastery. "Time is on our side. The great social forces which move onward in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of our debates does not for a moment impede or disturb — those great social forces are against you. They are marshalled on our side; and the banner which we now carry in this fight, though perhaps at some moment it may droop over our sinking heads, yet it soon again will float in the eye of Heaven, and will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain and a not far distant victory."

In the mean time the defeat too surely foreseen was accomplished. The Adullamites coalescing with the Conservatives made it impossible to pass the measure, which was finally thrown out. The Ministry resigned, and the Earl of Derby, most unhappy of Cabinet constructors, was again called upon to form a Ministry from a party in a hopeless minority.

In the race for the highest office of the State, Mr. Disraeli beat Mr. Gladstone by one lap, as he had outrun him by the same distance when the Chancellorship of the Exchequer was the goal. The Earl of Derby held office just long enough to see passed, by the Ministry of which he was the head, a Reform

Bill exceeding in its democratic tendencies any that had been proposed by a responsible Liberal Ministry. As soon as Parliament met the following year, Lord Derby retired on the plea of ill-health, and Mr. Disraeli, who had the previous Session heard himself denounced by his later colleague, Lord Salisbury, as "a political adventurer," and his policy described as "one of legerdemain," became leader of the Conservative party and Prime Minister of England.

In this Session Mr. Gladstone's mind reached the final point of conviction that the Irish Church might no longer be endured. Early in the Session he laid upon the table of the House a series of resolutions. The first roundly declared that, "in the opinion of the House of Commons, it is necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist as an Establishment." On this question Liberals and Conservatives joined issue, the Liberals being united in a degree unusual then, not often repeated since. Successive divisions showed that the majority were overwhelmingly in favor of the disestablishment of the Church. On the question of Parliamentary Reform, Mr. Disraeli's position was not unfairly described by Mr. Lowe. "If," said Mr. Lowe, affecting to paraphrase the terms of the Conservative leader's reiterated speech, "the House will deign to take us into its counsel, if it will co-operate with us in this matter, we shall receive with cordiality, with deference, nay, even with gratitude, any suggestion it likes to offer. Say what you like to us,

only for God's sake leave us in our places." Mr. Disraeli had, as he himself boasted, educated his party in the matter of Parliamentary Reform. But in view of such a question as the disestablishment of the Church, parleying was impossible. He must fight; and finding fighting impossible with the Parliament assembled, he brought about its dissolution, and appealed to the country.

The answer was sharp and unmistakable. By tremendous exertions, concentrated with all the power of personal dislike and party hatred, Mr. Gladstone was defeated in Lancashire. Elsewhere the Liberals had an overwhelming triumph, and Mr. Gladstone (returned from Greenwich, which had done for him in this election the service performed by South Lancashire in 1865) found himself at the head of an overwhelming majority — a Prime Minister personally more powerful than any who had held the reins of State since the palmiest days of Sir Robert Peel.

CHAPTER VI.

PREMIER.

INVESTED with supreme power, with the immediate mission of disestablishing the Irish Church, he set himself about the task with characteristic energy. At the earliest date he submitted to the new Parliament his Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church. The second reading was carried by a majority of 118, in a House, including tellers, of 622 members, a striking event that disposed of anything like legitimate opposition. Opposition there was, nevertheless, and it was three months before the Bill passed through Committee, during which time, statesmen of the calibre of Mr. Cavendish Bentinck, Mr. James Lowther, and Mr. "Tom" Collins rose innumerable times to state their opinion that the end of all things was at hand, and to hint, as plainly as might be within Parliamentary limits, their personal opinion of the author of so much evil.

The next Session (1870) was primarily devoted to the Irish Land Bill, this year added to the statute-book; in addition, the Elementary Education Act was passed, — hardy fruits of a Session disturbed and interrupted by interpellations and debates on the policy of the Government with respect to the war between France and Prussia. The next year saw

passed the Army Regulation Bill, embodying the Abolition of Purchase, which latter Mr. Gladstone finally accomplished, in opposition to the House of Lords, by invoking the Royal Warrant. The Ballot Bill, also brought in this Session, was thrown out by the Lords. In the following year it was brought in again, and, being put in the forefront of the programme, was carried. A less happy fate befell the Irish University Bill, which brought about a new Cave of Adullam, and was thrown out by a coalition between the extreme Liberals and the watchful Conservatives. A majority of three in a House of 573 declared against the Government, whereupon Mr. Gladstone resigned. The Queen sent for Mr. Disraeli, and invited him to form a Ministry. But the Leader of the Opposition, with a prescience loudly murmured against at the time by his impatient followers, declined to hurry events. Mr. Gladstone returned to office, and the Session pursued its course.

But the end was not far off. Mr. Gladstone had lived fast and travelled far. He had accomplished in four Sessions an amount of work formerly estimated as the full allowance of four Parliaments. He had done all, and more than all he had promised, far more than might reasonably have been anticipated on entering office. The usual symptoms that follow on repletion began to manifest themselves. The House of Commons was restless, discontented and ill-humored, while the country, waxing fat,

began to kick. The Premier was not constitutionally the kind of man for meeting and overcoming such a crisis. He had always been at a disadvantage as compared with his great rival in respect of personal manner. He was too much in earnest to pay a just measure of attention to those little courtesies which count for much even in the government of an empire on which the sun never sets. It would be an exaggeration to say that Lord Beaconsfield was never in earnest. It is unquestionable that he was never so much exhausted by earnestness that he forgot to pay those petty homages which cost so little, and to the leader of a party are worth so much.

Mr. Gladstone's gaze was fixed far above heads of mortal men, and the natural consequence was that when he moved about his daily work he frequently knocked up against his own friends and trod upon their corns. The average of personal popularity was not made up by any of his colleagues. Some, notably Mr. Lowe and Mr. Ayrton, were viewed with strong personal dislike by the public, whom they in their turn unmercifully snubbed. Mr. Gladstone, his colleagues, and his policy began to be assailed from all sides. Foreign policy, being necessarily less susceptible of full comprehension than any other ramification of Constitutional Government, has always been peculiarly attractive to the more ignorant among us. It is a large question, upon which small intelligences like to swell and puny persons

love to strut. Mr. Gladstone's foreign policy was assailed with persistent clamor. But the most dangerous symptom of approaching decay was found in the vitality of sections ranged under the common banner of Liberalism.

This spirit began to manifest itself for the first time in the Committee on the Education Bill, when the Nonconformist body spied under Mr. Forster's muffler the beard of a Denominationalist. In making a last protest on the third reading of the Bill, Mr. Miall affirmed that the Nonconformists "could not stand this sort of thing much longer."

Mr. Gladstone was sitting quietly, even listlessly, on the Treasury Bench, when this threatening speech was made. He had not intended to join in the debate, the matter having been already talked out over many sittings. Moreover, the Bill was not in his charge, but Mr. Forster's. When these words fell on his ear, he quickly rose from his recumbent position, and those looking on knew that a scene was imminent.

As Mr. Miall resumed his seat, the Premier sprang to his feet, the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed. "I hope," he said, in those slow, carefully-accentuated tones which marked the rarely-reached white heat of his passion, "my honorable friend will not continue his support of the Government one moment longer than he deems it consistent with his sense of duty and right. For God's sake, sir, let him withdraw it the moment he thinks it better for

the cause he has at heart that he should do so. So long as my honorable friend thinks fit to give us his support we will co-operate with my honorable friend for every purpose we have in common. But when we think his opinions and demands exacting, when we think he looks too much to the section of the community he adorns, and too little to the interests of the people at large, we must then recollect that we are the Government of the Queen, and that those who have assumed the high responsibility of administering the affairs of this Empire must endeavor to forget the parts in the whole, and must, in the great measures they introduce into the House, propose to themselves no meaner or narrower object than the welfare of the Empire at large."

In the Session of 1872 the growing lassitude of Parliament was shown on the second reading of the Ballot Bill — a measure of the first importance, for the division on the second reading of which the united strenuous exertions of the Whips could muster an aggregate voting power of only 165. The third reading was carried by 276 votes against 218; figures which show that Mr. Gladstone still had a substantial majority in the House. By the Licensing Act, introduced and passed this Session, the popularity of the Government received a fresh blow. It was reserved for the Irish University Bill to complete the destruction. The majority against the second reading of this Bill was very small, and was made up of sections not likely to reunite under any pro-

bable circumstances. Mr. Gladstone, as has been shown, resumed office when Mr. Disraeli declined to have his hand forced. But he never really recovered from the blow thus struck.

The Session flickered to an end amidst constant wrangles and an aggravating disregard for authority. In vain Mr. Ayrton had been cast overboard. In vain Mr. Lowe repeated in his own person the useful purposes of Jonah. The Ministerial ship would not right, lying in the trough of the sea, an object of derision to the fickle public who five years earlier had helped to launch it amidst demonstrations of the wildest enthusiasm. Buffeted abroad, assailed from within, angry, dispirited with existing circumstances, hopeful of the verdict of a nation whose behests he had splendidly fulfilled, Mr. Gladstone suddenly cut the Gordian knot. On the 24th of January, 1874, just on the eve of the assembling of Parliament for the customary Session, the country awoke to find Parliament was dissolved. It was through the medium of an address to the electors of Greenwich that the startling news was communicated. There was considerable vigor in the lengthy document, and Mr. Gladstone, who a few months earlier, upon the resignation of Mr. Lowe, had returned to his old office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, promised a renewed exhibition of the magic with which the country was once familiar, now to be directed to the extinction of the Income Tax. But between the lines it was not difficult to read that the

great statesman was weary and sick at heart. "If," he said, "the trust of this Administration be by the effect of the present elections virtually renewed, I for one will serve you, for what remains of my time, faithfully. If the confidence of the country be taken from us, and handed over to others whom you may deem more worthy, I for one shall accept cheerfully my dismissal."

There was no presage of victory in such a call to battle. But in his gloomiest moments Mr. Gladstone could not have anticipated the full depth of the reverse of fortune awaiting him at the poll. He himself narrowly escaped defeat at Greenwich, coming in second, the head of the poll being reserved for an estimable but obscure Conservative. Elsewhere, all along the line, the Liberals were defeated. Broken was the phalanx, which within seven years, dating from 1867 — two years in opposition and five in office — had achieved a record of work rarely equalled, never beaten. They had abolished the compulsory Church rate. They had transformed a nominal Reform Bill into a real measure. They had abolished the Irish Church, reformed the Irish Land Laws, settled the question of Scotch Education, and far advanced the cause of education in England. Purchase in the army had been abolished, and the pathway of promotion thrown open to the foot of merit. The Ballot Bill had been carried; the judicature of the country reformed; religious tests finally abolished in the universities; the esti-

mates reduced, whilst the defensive forces of the country, both military and naval, had been appreciably increased.

This was a claim upon the gratitude of an electorate which seemed likely to meet with abundant reward. But Mr. Gladstone had lived long enough to learn the bitter lesson that gratitude is unknown in politics. When the gains and losses were counted up, it was found that Mr. Disraeli, meeting Parliament in 1874, was almost exactly in the same position as Mr. Gladstone had been when meeting Parliament in 1869. The pendulum, having swung violently to one side, had in return nearly reached the same altitude on the other.

CHAPTER VII.

THROWING UP THE SPONGE.

THE new Parliament opened on the 5th of March, 1874, with Mr. Disraeli in the seat where through six eventful years he had watched Mr. Gladstone throned. For the first time in his political history he was not only in office, but in power. In the Session of 1873, Mr. Gladstone being defeated on the Irish Education Bill by the action of the Nonconformist conscience, Mr. Disraeli had, to the mani fest chagrin of some of his supporters, declined to take office. His prescience was magnificently justified by the swiftly succeeding event of the general election. Four years earlier, in a private letter which nearly a quarter of a century later saw the light of day, Mr. Froude wrote: "I have been among some of the Tory magnates lately. They distrust Disraeli still, and will never again be led by him. So they are as sheep that have no shepherd. Lord Salisbury's time may come; but not yet."

That was, as many still living know, and as a multitude of written testimony proves, the attitude towards Disraeli of the party he had at length, with infinite patience and consummate skill, led out of the wilderness. When, in 1852, Disraeli, made Chancellor of the Exchequer by the audacious Lord

Derby, gave his first Parliamentary dinner, *The Saturday Review*, then the organ of blue-blooded Toryism, celebrated the event in much appreciated verse, of which one stanza lingers in the memory:

> And o'er them all in jewels dight,
> Not known from real in any light,
> And St. John's clothes as good as new,
> Enraptured sat the glorious Jew.

For Disraeli the plucky fight against jealousy and detraction was over. Long a pariah among the aristocratic party, he was now to become its idol, soon amid universal acclaim to take his seat among them as Earl of Beaconsfield. The dramatic interest of the episode was completed by the fact that, coincidentally with his supreme elevation, came about the ruinous fall of his great adversary.

There was much curiosity as to what part Mr. Gladstone would be disposed to play in the transformed scene on the parliamentary boards. It is possible that, even at this early date, some of his friends had been made aware of his intention of withdrawing from the conflict. It was a habit of his mind, whenever he met with rebuff in the political arena, to contemplate retirement. In Committee on the Reform Bill of 1867, he, then the Leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons, brought forward a series of amendments which, had the whole of the party voted with him, would have been engrafted in the Bill. But there was then, as there has been since, a cave. As Mr. Bright put it in a

speech delivered a few days later, "very small men who during their whole political lives have not advanced the question of Reform by one hair's breadth or by one moment in time, can at a critical hour throw themselves athwart the objects of a great party, and mar a great measure that ought to affect the interests of the country beneficially for a long time."

Mr. Gladstone's amendments were negatived by a majority of twenty-one in a House of 599 members. He thereupon, in reply to a convenient letter from Mr. Crawford, one of the members for the City, threw up the whole business, declining to proceed with blocks of other amendments of which he had given notice. Earlier even than this he had begun to talk in the "at-my-time-of-life" mood that became so familiar throughout the closing quarter-of-a-century of his public life. In 1861 he wrote: "Events are not wholly unwelcome which remind me that my own public life is now in its thirtieth year, and ought not to last very many years longer." In the troublesome times of 1873, when friends were falling off and faction rearing its head with fuller rigor, Mr. Gladstone was accustomed constantly to refer to retirement. In his diary, Bishop Wilberforce writes under date May 6th, 1873: "Gladstone much talking; how little real good work any Premier has done after sixty. Peel; Palmerston, his work all really done before; the Duke of Wellington added nothing to his reputation after. I told him Dr.

Clark thought it would be physically worse for him to retire. 'Dr. Clark does not know how completely I should employ myself,' he replied," probably with Homer and the Vatican in his eye.

Whatever intention Mr. Gladstone may have formed when he found his forces crumbling to pieces at the general election, he did not at the outset shirk his Parliamentary duties. With the opening of a new Parliament there was necessity for the election of a new Speaker, or the re-election of the old one. He was still, nominally, Leader of the Liberal Party, and upon him devolved in the House of Commons the duty of supporting the Speaker-elect on taking the chair. The House was crowded with an unusual number of new members, anxious to see all that was to be seen, not least eager to catch a glimpse of the great statesman, who, quitting the House in the late autumn master of a majority that still could muster between sixty and seventy, returned to it to find himself in a minority of half a hundred. Mr. Gladstone so timed his reappearance on the scene that any demonstration, friendly or hostile, was impossible. Members trooping out to the other House to hear the Royal Commission read, came back to find him on the Front Opposition Bench, not in the place of Leader opposite the brass-bound box, but humbly bestowed almost under the shadow of the gallery, where Under Secretaries are accustomed to sit. It was noted that, contrary to his Parliamentary habit, he had brought with him

his hat, the fleeting character of his visit being further studiously indicated by his carrying a stick, and wearing gloves. He was loudly cheered from the Liberal side when he followed the official proposer and seconder of the Speaker's re-election. But he was not to be stirred beyond the depths of some ordinary courtly remarks, delivered midway down the table, his hand resting on his stick.

With all his fervor and his sometimes torrential passion Mr. Gladstone is a man whose shortest step is ordered with grave deliberation. Those who saw portents of coming change in his hat and stick and gloves, and the precise position at the table from which he addressed the House on the re-election of the Speaker, had speedy confirmation of their suspicions. On the 12th of March in the first year of the new Parliament, he wrote to Lord Granville the following momentous letter: —

"I have issued a circular to Members of Parliament of the Liberal party on the occasion of the opening of Parliamentary business. But I feel it to be necessary that, while discharging this duty, I should explain what a circular could not convey with regard to my individual position at the present time. I need not apologize for addressing these explanations to you. Independently of other reasons for so troubling you, it is enough to observe that you have very long represented the Liberal party, and have also acted on behalf of the late Government, from its commencement to its close, in the House of Lords.

"For a variety of reasons personal to myself, I could not contemplate any unlimited extension of active political service; and I am anxious that it should be clearly understood by those friends with whom I have acted in the direction of affairs, that at my age I must reserve my entire freedom to divest myself of all the responsibilities of leadership at no distant time. The need of rest will prevent me from giving more than occasional attendance in the House of Commons during the present Session.

"I should be desirous, shortly before the commencement of the Session of 1875, to consider whether there would be advantage in my placing my services for a time at the disposal of the Liberal party, or whether I should then claim exemption from the duties I have hitherto discharged. If, however, there should be reasonable ground for believing that, instead of the course which I have sketched, it would be preferable, in the view of the party generally, for me to assume at once the place of an independent member, I should willingly adopt the latter alternative. But I shall retain all the desire I have hitherto felt for the welfare of the party, and if the gentlemen composing it should think fit either to choose a leader or make provision *ad interim*, with a view to the convenience of the present year, the person designated would, of course, command from me any assistance which he might find occasion to seek, and which it might be in my power to render."

In spite of this indication of desire and intention to withdraw, Mr. Gladstone still occasionally revisited the House of Commons. He could not resist the temptation of criticizing the first Budget of the new Ministry, brought in by Sir Stafford Northcote, built up on the splendid surplus left by him as a legacy to his successors. He replied with something of his ancient fire to a violently rude attack made upon him by Mr. Smollet, who accused him of having "organized a Dissolution in secret, and having by unworthy, improper, and unconstitutional methods, tried to seize power."

His most notable reappearance in the new Parliament was in connection with the debate on the Public Worship Regulation Bill. This measure had been brought into the Lords and passed through the House under the direction of Archbishop Tait. Mr. Disraeli disclosing a curiously strong interest in it, it suddenly loomed large upon the Parliamentary arena. The Archbishop had defined its purpose as an effort to put down Ritualism. Mr. Disraeli, in one of his well-considered phrases that immediately caught on, defined it as an attack on "mass in masquerade." Mr. Gladstone unexpectedly turned up in hot opposition to the measure, which he attempted to smother under six resolutions.

Interest in the Bill, intense as it had grown, was for a while obscured by a personal conflict between Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Gladstone. One of the last desperate attempts made to keep the late

Ministry on its legs had been the recruitment of two gentlemen, known at the time as Mr. Henry James and Mr. Vernon Harcourt. Seated together on the front bench below the gangway, these two had more effectively worried their nominal chief than had the regular opposition, even though led by Mr. Disraeli. Towards the close of the Session of 1873 there had been an angry scene, in which Mr. Gladstone, driven to bay, had turned upon his honorable friends below the gangway and berated them something after the fashion in which he had fallen upon the more inoffensive Mr. Miall. The next thing heard in this connection was in November following, when Mr. Henry James was made Attorney-General, and Mr. Vernon Harcourt, becoming Solicitor-General, came to be known as Sir William. Neither of the new law officers sat on the Treasury Bench, for before the new Session was summoned dissolution had swooped down on the astonished Commons. Their ex-Ministerial position, otherwise, as far as Parliament was concerned, a Barmecide feast, entitled both to seats on the Front Opposition Bench, a privilege of which they forthwith availed themselves.

Sir William Harcourt ranged himself on the side of Mr. Disraeli in support of the Public Worship Regulation Bill. Thus it came to pass that his first prominent appearance under his new style was in conflict with the statesman who had conferred the honor upon him. Sir William did not mince matters or modify phrases. He went straight for Mr. Glad-

stone, making his attack the more bitter by contrast with the eulogistic terms in which he alluded to Mr. Disraeli, "a leader who is proud of the House of Commons, and of whom the House of Commons is proud." Mr. Gladstone, having at this stage already spoken, said nothing in immediate reply. A few days later he found opportunity to administer to his rebellious colleague a trouncing which the House enjoyed with a zest equalled only by the delight with which it had seen Sir William Harcourt biting at the hand that had fed him with the Solicitor-Generalship.

The episode had significance far beyond the bearings of the Public Worship Bill, inasmuch as the House of Commons saw in it fresh testimony of what it regarded as the final collapse of the once powerful statesman. Sir William Harcourt, it was argued, was an exceedingly shrewd man, with special opportunities of knowing Mr. Gladstone's exact position and prospects. If he thought it safe to turn and rend him, hopeless indeed was his case.

A conclusion which shows how prone to error are the wisest amongst us.

CHAPTER VIII.

PAMPHLETEER.

PARLIAMENT was summoned to meet for the Session of 1875 on the 5th of February. Three weeks earlier Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville announcing his final resolve to retire from the Leadership of the Liberal party. "The time has, I think, arrived," he wrote, "when I ought to revert to the subject of the letter which I addressed to you on March the 12th. Before determining whether I should offer to assume a charge which might extend over a length of time, I have reviewed with all the care in my power, a number of considerations both public and private, of which a portion, and these not by any means insignificant, were not in existence at the date of the letter. The result has been that I see no public advantage in my continuing to act as the Leader of the Liberal party; and that at the age of sixty-five, and after forty-two years of a laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire on the present opportunity. This retirement is dictated to me by my personal views as to the best method of spending the closing years of my life. I need hardly say that my conduct in Parliament will continue to be governed by the principles on which

I have heretofore acted; and whatever arrangements may be made for the treatment of general business, and for the advantage or convenience of the Liberal party, they will have my cordial support. I should perhaps add that I am at present, and mean for a short time to be, engaged on a special matter which occupies me closely."

The special matter upon which Mr. Gladstone was engaged proved to be a crusade against the Vatican, undertaken with the ardor of youth and with a concentrated energy amazing in a man who had retired from Parliamentary and political life on the specific ground that he was aweary. In the preceding year he had followed up his futile opposition to the Regulation of Public Worship Bill by writing an article in one of the monthly magazines, a course that soon grew familiar but was at the time regarded as notable in an ex-Prime Minister. This was followed by other papers dealing with "The Church of England and Ritualism." This raised a storm of theological controversy in which Mr. Gladstone positively revelled. Roman Catholics and Ritualists buzzed about his ears with angry replies, to which he made rejoinder in pamphlets. One bore the inscription, "The Vatican Decrees and their Bearing on Civil Allegiance." A final rejoinder in another pamphlet was entitled "Vaticanism." Both works had a phenomenal sale, and the tide of controversy that rose with them seemed to bear Mr. Gladstone forever away from the Parliamentary shore.

On the eve of the Session, members of the Liberal party, a disheartened minority in the House of Commons, had met at the Reform Club to elect a leader. Mr. Gladstone had stepped down from his high place, and was so engrossed in his wrangle round the Church porch, that he had not time to give a thought to public affairs, or a day to the duties of the House of Commons. The result of the meeting at the Reform Club was that Lord Hartington was unanimously elected to fill the thankless post of Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons. He took his seat in front of the brass-bound box, and for a while business of the House went on as if Mr. Gladstone were dead and buried. Occasionally he looked in, bringing with him hat and stick and gloves, remaining for half an hour or so at the lower end of the front Opposition Bench, where he found a companion in Mr. Bright, and stealing silently away.

One afternoon in March of this year he unexpectedly interposed, delivering a speech which created a profound sensation. It was on a Bill introduced by Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, then Secretary of State for War, designed, as Mr. Lowe put it, "to make commissions in the army a valuable commodity." Stung by this attempt to get behind his own action in abolishing purchase, Mr. Gladstone spoke with great animation and irresistible force. Members looking from the lithe, animated figure standing at the table upon the immobile figure seated in the place of Leader instinctively felt that the whole arrangement was a farce, to

be made an end of whenever Mr. Gladstone felt disposed to return and claim his own. But the time was not yet, and the chief disturbance under Lord Hartington's rule came from below the gangway on his own side, whence Mr. Chamberlain would presently jeer at the harassed captain, hailing him as "late the Leader of the Liberal party."

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIERY CROSS.

THE Eastern Question developed in the summer of 1875. Mr. Gladstone, speaking three years later at Hawarden, declared that he had not opened his mouth for one word of criticism on the subject till the 1st of July, 1876. "When the Government had, by sending the fleet to Besika Bay, encouraged the Turks in their obstinate resistance to reform; and when the Prime Minister, by his notorious fencing answers on the subject of the Bulgarian atrocities, had shown that no reliance could be placed on the Government for the purposes of humanity in the East; and when they, by repelling and rejecting the Berlin Memorandum, had broken up the concert of Europe and had proposed nothing themselves in return — till all these things had happened I never said a word in criticism of the proceedings of the Government."

On the 23rd of June, 1876, *The Daily News* published particulars, furnished by its Constantinople correspondent, of what soon came to be known throughout the world as the Bulgarian atrocities. Questions were put in both Houses of Parliament. Mr. Disraeli, replying to an inquiry by Mr. Forster, jauntily affirmed that the story published in *The Daily News*

rested on nothing more than "coffee-house babble." One detail that had profoundly impressed the public mind described the impalement of hapless Bulgarians by the Bashi Bazouks. The truth of this Mr. Disraeli took leave to doubt, airily adding, "In the East when it is proposed to do a man to death, a much more expeditious method of business is usually adopted." When this conversation was going on in the House of Commons Mr. Gladstone was rusticating at Hawarden, engaged in preparation of fresh magazine articles. But the cry that went up from the sixty villages of Bulgaria, their homesteads trampled underfoot, their men tortured to death, their women dishonored, found response in every fibre of his frame. He hurried back to town and commenced a campaign which ended in the overthrow of an apparently impregnable Ministry.

He occupied the earliest weeks of the Parliamentary recess (1876) in writing a pamphlet entitled, "Bulgarian Horrors." "Let us," he said, in a passage containing a memorable phrase, "insist that our Government, which has been working in one direction, shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigor to concur with the other States of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely, by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis, and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I

hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned."

He followed up the hurling of this thunderbolt by an address to his constituents mustered on Blackheath. Recurring to this epoch many years after, he observed: "After the Parliamentary Session of 1876, I thought the agitation against the Turks in Bulgaria was all up for a time. I knew it would revive, and I thought it would revive in the next Session. But I gave it up for the moment until I saw in the newspapers, by accident, that the working-men of England were going to meet in London on the subject. I said to myself that moment, 'Then it is alive!' Seeing that it was alive, I did what I could, and we all did what we could, and we stirred the country to such an extent that if the Government had dissolved Parliament at that moment I do not believe there would have been a hundred men returned to support its policy."

In a fine passage of this Blackheath speech he advocated common action between England and Russia, who were chiefly responsible in the matter. "Upon the concord and hearty co-operation — not upon a mere hollow truce between England and Russia, but upon their concord and hearty, cordial co-operation — depends a good settlement of this question. Their power is immense. The power of Russia by land for acting upon these countries, as against Turkey, is perfectly resistless. The power of England by sea is scarcely less important at this moment. For I ask you, what would be the condition of the Turkish armies if the

British Admiral, now in Besika Bay, were to inform the Government of Constantinople that from that hour, until atonement had been made — until punishment had descended, until justice had been vindicated — not a man, nor a ship, nor a boat, should cross the waters of the Bosphorus, or the cloudy Euxine, or the bright Ægean, to carry aid to the Turkish troops?"

By this time Mr. Disraeli, now Lord Beaconsfield, discovered he had made a mistake in treating with jocularity charges promptly substantiated by the official report of Mr. Baring. It was felt that Mr. Gladstone's Blackheath speech must be replied to. So Lord Beaconsfield, going down to Aylesbury, described the conduct of the Opposition in this matter as "worse than any Bulgarian atrocity." That did not mend matters, nor did further heated denunciation of "designing politicians who take advantage of sublime sentiments and apply them for the furtherance of their sinister ends."

There was no one found to palliate the action of the Turks in Bulgaria, but there were many who, evading the issue, bitterly attacked Mr. Gladstone. He was not even safe from personal violence as he walked through the streets of London, and when he sought the shelter of his own house, his windows were broken by an infuriated mob. The "Jingo" Press did not get quite so far as a Turkish newspaper which printed a detailed biography of "the man Gladstone, projector of mischief." This set forth how he was "born in 1796, the offspring of the headlong passion of a Bulgarian

named Demitri, the servant of a pig merchant named Nestory." He went to London in charge of some pigs his master desired to sell. Desiring to pass himself off as an Englishman, he changed his Bulgarian name, Grozadin, to Gladstone. "His gluttony for gold makes Gladstone look yellow. According to those who know him he is of middling height, with a yellow face, wearing closely cut whiskers in the European style, and as a sign of his satanic spirit his forehead and upper forehead are bare. His evil temper has made his hair fall off, so that from a distance he might be taken for quite bald." This was, of course, too grotesque for imitation in English newspapers. But some managed to distinguish themselves and earn the approval of the music-halls by the violence of their attack upon the denouncer of Turkish infamy.

Whilst recovering something of his ancient power in the provinces, Mr. Gladstone was by no means sustained by the full support of the Liberal members of the House of Commons. It was then recognized as an awkward and an inconvenient thing that, after all that had happened consequent on the arrangement at the Reform Club in 1875, he should be sweeping back with torrential force to his old position as Leader. A feeling of loyalty to Lord Hartington, who had done the very best possible for him in the position to which he had been unwillingly summoned, influenced some Liberal members. Others were not absolutely free from sympathy with, or apprehension of, the Jingo spirit just then rampant.

Early in the Session of 1877 Mr. Gladstone tabled five resolutions on the Eastern Question. They embodied an expression of dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Porte, and a declaration that until guarantees on behalf of her subject populations were forthcoming, Turkey should be deemed to have lost all claim to receive either the material or moral support of the British Crown. The movement was received very coldly by the Liberals. Sir John Lubbock gave notice that, on the resolutions being moved, he would move the previous question. There was talk of a serious split in the party, and anxious negotiations were carried on. These resulted in patching up the breach, and when, at the close of five nights' debate, the division took place, Mr. Gladstone received the support of his colleagues on the Front Bench, and of the main body of the Liberal party. But the resolutions were negatived by a majority of 131 in a House of 577 members.

This seemed a hopeless struggle. Undeterred, Mr. Gladstone fought on. Feeling against him on the part of the majority of the House ran so high that one night in the Session of 1878, as he was proceeding to record his vote, a mob of Conservative gentlemen congregating at the glass door in the other division lobby set up a prolonged yell of execration, distinctly heard in the House. This did not cow him, nor did bitter attacks in the newspapers, nor the lukewarmness of friends make him quail. "My purpose," he said at Oxford, speaking on the eve of the Session of

1878, "is, day and night, week by week, month by month, to counter-work what I believe to be the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield."

That resolve was finally crowned by the first Midlothian campaign, which opened in November, 1879. The county of Edinburgh was represented by Lord Dalkeith, son and heir of the Duke of Buccleuch. It seemed an impregnable fortress of Conservatism. If it could be stormed, anything else on the line of battle might surely be carried. Mr. Gladstone undertook the task with breezy courage and contagious confidence. His journey northward partook of the character of a triumphal procession. At Carlisle, Hawick, Galashiels, wherever the train stopped, the populace mustered to cheer the champion of humanity even against Turkey. All Edinburgh seemed to have turned out in the streets to welcome him, a torchlight procession accompanying him on his way to Dalmeny, where he became the guest of Lord Rosebery. He remained in Scotland a fortnight, speaking sometimes twice a day to enormous audiences glowing in the fire of his eloquence. His homeward journey was marked by outbursts of popular enthusiasm, even of fuller tide than that which greeted him when he set out.

In the spring of 1880, Lord Beaconsfield, encouraged by success at the poll in Southwark and Liverpool, resolved to chance a general election. The announcement of the proximate dissolution was the signal for Mr. Gladstone's once more carrying the fiery cross

beyond the Tweed. Upon Midlothian were centred the interests of the general election. He won the seat by 1,579 votes against 1,368 polled by Lord Dalkeith. When the final poll of the general election was made up it appeared that the new House of Commons was composed of 354 Liberals, against 236 Conservatives and 62 Home Rulers, — a Liberal majority of 56 over a possible combination of antagonists.

CHAPTER X.

PREMIER AGAIN.

LORD BEACONSFIELD did not wait for the final returns from the poll before admitting his defeat. He placed his resignation in the hands of Her Majesty, and the question arose, Who is to succeed him as First Minister of the Crown? From one point of view there seemed no possibility of diversity of answer. One man single-handed, fighting against enormous odds, had broken down the strength of the most powerful Conservative Ministry of modern times, and on its ruins had built up a massive structure of Liberal majority. The country called aloud for Mr. Gladstone, and viewed with impatience efforts made to set aside his claims. These were not without justification, though they seemed at the time peculiarly persistent. Lord Hartington was still nominally the Leader of the Liberal party. He had at great sacrifice of personal inclination come forward at a critical time and undertaken the drudgery of the Leadership. It was only courteous to give him the opportunity of declining the task of forming a Ministry. But when Lord Hartington, in spite, it is understood, of unusual pressure put upon him, shrank from attempting to achieve the impossible, attention was turned in another direction. Lord Granville was sent for and invited to form a

Ministry. Not less clearly than Lord Hartington he recognized the inevitableness of the situation, and pointed to Mr. Gladstone as the only possible Premier. Finally came the summons to Mr. Gladstone, who promptly undertook a task to which he had earlier been called by the voice of an overpowering majority of the people.

When the Ministry was completed, the list presented an appearance of strength and stability that promised a long, honorable, and useful career. Lord Granville and Lord Hartington, cordially accepting the situation, resumed their allegiance to their former chief, the one serving the new Ministry as Foreign Secretary, the other as Secretary of State for India. Mr. Gladstone coupled with the office of First Lord of the Treasury the duties of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sir William Harcourt, preferring not to pursue the pathway opened for him when he was made a Law Officer of the Crown, became Home Secretary. Mr. Childers was Secretary for War. Lord Kimberley cared for the Colonies. Lord Northbrook was First Lord of the Admiralty. Mr. Forster was Chief Secretary for Ireland. The Earl of Selborne presided in the House of Lords as Lord Chancellor. Earl Spencer was Lord President of the Council. The Duke of Argyll and Mr. Bright divided between them the posts of Lord Privy Seal and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, whose importance arose almost exclusively from the fact that they carried with them seats in the Cabinet.

As the stirring of the depths of Radicalism had had much to do with the great triumph at the polls, Mr. Gladstone found it necessary to leaven his administration by material drawn from below the gangway. The two most prominent members seated in that part of the House during the preceding Parliament were Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain. That both would have office conferred upon them was regarded as a matter of course. It was also the general impression, based upon consideration of his longer Parliamentary standing, that Sir Charles Dilke would receive the higher promotion. There was some surprise when it was announced that Mr. Chamberlain at a stride took his seat in the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade, Sir Charles Dilke being content with the post of Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Other new blood infused into the Ministry was contributed by Mr. Herschell, who was knighted and made Solicitor-General; Mr. Osborne Morgan, who became Judge-Advocate-General; Mr. Fawcett, Postmaster-General; Mr. Mundella, Vice-President of the Council; whilst among the Under Secretaries for the Home Department modestly figured the name of Arthur Wellesley Peel, he and the House all unknowing that before many years had passed he would prove himself one of the best Speakers that ever sat in the Chair.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BRADLAUGH BLIGHT.

With a well-trimmed ship, splendidly manned, and the full breeze of popular favor behind it, Mr. Gladstone's second Administration set out on what promised to be a pleasant and prosperous voyage. But before it was warped out of dock there befel an incident fraught with consequences which, more than anything else, brought about final shipwreck. The cloud was at first no bigger than a man's hand. The new Parliament met on the 29th of April, and, Mr. Brand having been re-elected Speaker, the process of swearing-in Members proceeded. On the third day Mr. Bradlaugh, who had been elected member for Northampton, claimed the right to make affirmation instead of taking the oath. That is an alternative, selection of which by a member in ordinary circumstances attracts no notice. Mr. Bright, presently coming back after re-election, made affirmation, as his brother and other Members of his faith had done. Mr. Bradlaugh's case was notoriously different. He admitted himself disqualified from taking the oath because he did not believe in the existence of the Deity invoked.

Had the Speaker, when privately approached on the subject, acceded to the member for Northamp-

ton's request and permitted him to make affirmation, the incident would have escaped the attention of the House, the whole course of the Session, and of some that succeeded it, would have been altered. That Mr. Bradlaugh was right in his contention was, after years of controversy, conceded by the House, which went the length of authorizing the erasure from its journal of a declaration to the contrary. The Speaker shrank from taking on himself responsibility in the matter. He invited the House to deal with it, and on the motion of Lord Frederick Cavendish, one of the minor Ministers whom the absurd rules controlling the acceptance of office permitted to be present at this juncture, a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the subject. Sir Stafford Northcote seconded the motion, and though there was some restiveness displayed by the young Tory lions, no serious indication was forthcoming of all this apparently simple episode portended.

A week later, when motion was made to nominate the Committee, the breeze began to stir. Sir Henry Wolff, making his first appearance in this memorable controversy, moved the previous question, and was seconded in a noisy speech by Mr. Stanley Leighton. The leaders of the Opposition still hung back. What movement they made was in support of the Ministry. Sir John Holker, ex-Attorney-General, advised Sir Henry Wolff not to proceed with his amendment, advice which he showed a disposition to accept. But the Irish members now took up the

running, and a division was forced, the motion being carried by a considerable majority.

At this stage the House, hitherto sheep without shepherds, adjourned in order to complete the re-election of Ministers. In this interval the militant party had opportunity of considering a situation the potentialities of which, as affording a means of harassing the Government, daily grew. The interposition of the Irish members was full of hope. They as Catholics would be impelled to resist to the utmost the incursion upon the House of Commons of an avowed Atheist. Amongst Liberals there were many devout men who would shrink even at Mr. Gladstone's bidding from supporting the claims of Mr. Bradlaugh. Right honorable gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench were the chief difficulty, with the keener-sighted tacticians below the gangway. But if they would not move they must be shoved ahead.

The Committee, by the casting vote of the chairman, decided that Mr. Bradlaugh, not belonging to the class of persons who like Quakers and Moravians are by law exempt from the necessity of taking the oath, might not make affirmation on taking his seat. Mr. Bradlaugh met this difficulty by an unexpected move. Since the House by the decision of its committee objected to his making affirmation, he was ready to oblige it by taking the oath.

On the 21st of May (1880) the House resumed its sittings, its crowded appearance testifying to high

expectation. The empty spaces on the Treasury Bench were now filled up by Ministers duly re-elected. Mr. Bradlaugh was observed standing below the bar in the position assigned to new members waiting to be sworn in. The Speaker pronounced the usual formula, "Members desiring to take their seats will please come to the table." Thereupon Mr. Bradlaugh strode forward. Sir Henry Wolff, who had obtained a convenient strategic position at the corner of the Front Bench below the gangway, sprang to his feet with loud cry, "I object!" The House was filled with sudden uproar. Sir Henry Wolff was on his feet on one side. Immediately opposite him Mr. Dillwyn upstanding, both gesticulating, whilst at the table stood Mr. Bradlaugh with hand outstretched to take the oath Sir Erskine May, then clerk at the table, had, in the ordinary performance of his duty, advanced to tender to him.

Mr. Bradlaugh presently withdrawing in obedience to instructions from the Speaker, animated debate ensued. Sir Henry Wolff moved that Mr. Bradlaugh be not allowed to take the oath. Mr. Gladstone now interposed, moving as an amendment that the case be referred to a Select Committee, with instructions to consider and report whether the House had any right, founded on precedent or otherwise, by a resolution to prevent a duly elected member from taking the oath. The progress made since the business first opened was testified to by Sir Stafford Northcote now throwing in his lot with the militant

party below the gangway. He declared his opposition to Mr. Gladstone's proposal, and his readiness to vote with Sir Henry Wolff. The debate was adjourned till the following Monday, when Lord Randolph Churchill made his first appearance on the scene, creating a profound impression by the vigor with which he supported Sir Henry Wolff's motion. On a division Mr. Gladstone's proposal for a new Committee was carried by 289 against 214, — a significant diminution of the normal Ministerial majority that inspired the now united Opposition to fresh effort.

The ball set rolling was kicked with increasing vigor. From the Opposition point of view the controversy served a double debt to pay. It not only harassed the Government, and sowed the seed of discord within its ranks, but by filling up time it prevented the accomplishment of those large important Liberal measures which Mr. Gladstone, fresh from a great victory at the poll, was eager to put forward.

As will appear from this brief narrative, Sir Henry Wolff was the actual originator of the cleverly conceived and ably engineered cabal. Lord Randolph Churchill, coming on the scene a little later in the day, promptly took the lead. Mr. John Gorst was recruited for active service, and forthwith was created — three all told — the historic Fourth Party. Mr. Arthur Balfour later entered upon a sort of novitiate. But he never fully took the vows, or altogether was one of the Brotherhood.

They were ready to harass the Government on any score, but the Bradlaugh Question, as the most promising, was cherished with infinite care and assiduity. The second Select Committee nominated by Mr. Gladstone came to the conclusion that, whilst Mr. Bradlaugh might not take the oath, there was no reason why he should not be permitted to affirm, assuming the responsibility of any legal consequences that might follow. Mr. Bradlaugh, whose complaisance was illimitable, went back to his original proposal to affirm. On his behalf Mr. Labouchere moved a resolution authorizing the member for Northampton to make affirmation. On this the House debated through two long nights. Mr. Bright interposed, making a powerful and eloquent appeal for toleration. On the second night Mr. Gladstone spoke to a crowded and excited House. It was known by this time that the Government were in a tight place. Earlier efforts to obtain full inquiry had resulted in significant diminution of their majority on the very threshold of the new Parliament. Inquiries made by the Whips pointed to the conclusion that, if Ministers associated themselves with Mr. Labouchere's motion they would suffer defeat. In this dilemma Mr. Gladstone adopted an attitude that grew familiar through the long-continued struggle. "We believe it to be our duty," he said, "frankly to offer our best advice in circumstances for which we are in no way responsible, and then to leave the matter in the hands of the House."

This way of putting the question is thoroughly understood in the House of Commons. It simply means that ordinary supporters of the Government are at liberty, in this particular case, to follow their personal convictions and inclinations, voting, if they please, against Ministers without incurring the responsibility of imperilling the position of the Government. Sir Hardinge Giffard had met Mr. Labouchere's motion with an amendment declaring that Mr. Bradlaugh be permitted neither to take the oath nor to affirm. Shortly after midnight the division was called in a House of over 500 members, strung to a pitch of highest excitement. It being a private member's motion there was no question of the action of the Ministerial tellers. Mr. Labouchere and the seconder of the motion "told" the Ayes, but it was Mr. Rowland Winn and Sir William Dyke, official Whips of the Opposition, that led the Noes, gathering into the unaccustomed lobby some devout Liberals, whilst many more, stopping short of actual revolt against Mr. Gladstone's lead, abstained from voting. When the paper was handed to Mr. Winn in token that the Opposition had triumphed there followed a scene of mad delight, members of the Opposition actually embracing each other in the ecstasy of delight at a turn of events in which they had at one blow honored God and stricken Mr. Gladstone. When silence was restored Mr. Winn read out the figures showing that 230 had voted for the motion and 275 against. Amid renewed

cheering Sir Hardinge Giffard's motion was carried without spoken dissent, and on the journals of the House was entered the resolution declaring Mr. Bradlaugh incompetent to sit as a member.

Nearly eleven years later the member for Northampton lay dying in his modest home in Circus Road. Once more, for the last time, the House of Commons was agitated by "the Bradlaugh Question." Motion was made that the House should expunge from its journals the resolution entered in the early days of the great Liberal Parliament. It was a hard task to impose. Already the House had tacitly admitted its error, and Mr. Bradlaugh, after hopelessly fighting against Conservative conviction when Mr. Gladstone was in office, was permitted quietly to take his seat as soon as a Conservative majority made possible a Conservative Ministry. Since the incoming of Lord Salisbury's Government, in 1886, Mr. Bradlaugh, again triumphantly re-elected at Northampton, had been accepted as one of the most useful and most moderate members of the House. That was one thing. It was quite another for the Imperial House of Commons publicly to put on the white sheet and, candle in hand, admit that it was in error when, in June, 1880, it had followed the leadership of Sir Hardinge Giffard, posed against Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright.

The House of Commons, though prone to be led astray by passion and prejudice, is, in the end, ever just and generous. Without a dissentient vote, it agreed to the expunging of the resolution; some

who had prominently supported it generously regretting that at the hour the decision took effect Death had Mr. Bradlaugh in too close grip for him to learn the glad tidings.

Between these two dates, 1880 and 1891, a great deal happened, giving prominence to Mr. Bradlaugh and his claim to represent Northampton in the House of Commons. Beaten in the Courts of Law, the precincts of the House of Commons barred against him, he came up time after time, was thrice heard at the bar, and once forcibly thrust forth from the Lobby of the House. Mr. Gladstone persisted in his attitude of non-official connection with the matter. When divisions were taken he voted in the sense that governed the final conclusion of the House. But, as he pointed out, in this matter he was clearly not Leader, and he relegated to Sir Stafford Northcote the duty of leading the House whenever the Bradlaugh business came up.

When the record of his long and busy life comes to be studied by posterity, there will surely be nothing that redounds with fuller force to his credit than his attitude and action in this pitiful controversy. For a man of his devotional habits, his strong, ever-present faith in God, it must have been not without pained effort that he ranged himself on the side of an avowed Atheist. It chanced that the Atheist in this particular quarrel had truth and justice on his side; and for truth and justice Mr. Gladstone has always been ready to fight against any odds. Deserted by some

of the most esteemed of his followers, beaten over and over again in the division lobby, with Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Henry Wolff avowed and accepted champions of Christianity, he, fighting on the other side, contributed to the recurrent debate some of the finest speeches the House had listened to even from his lips.

In 1883 the Government made one desperate attempt to put an end to a controversy which, diligently fed, clogged the wheels of public business, and slowly but surely undermined the authority of Government. A Bill was brought in, extending the conditions under which a man might claim to make affirmation. On the second reading Mr. Gladstone delivered a speech, the effect of which was seen in the division-lobby. "I have no fear of Atheism in this House," he said, in a concluding passage. "Truth is the expression of the Divine mind, and, however little our feeble vision may be able to discern the means by which God may provide for its preservation, we may leave the matter in His hands, and we may be sure that a firm and courageous application of every principle of equity and of justice is the best method we can adopt for the preservation and influence of truth. I must painfully record my opinion that grave injury has been done to religion in many minds — not in instructed minds, but in those which are ill-instructed or partially instructed, and which have large claims on our consideration — in consequence of steps which have, unhappily, been taken. Great mischief has been done

in many minds through the resistance offered to a man elected by the constituency of Northampton, which a portion of the people believe to be unjust. When they see the profession of religion, and the interest of religion, ostensibly associated with what they are deeply convinced is injustice, they are led to questions about religion itself. Unbelief attracts a sympathy which it would not otherwise enjoy, and the upshot is to impair those convictions and that religious faith the loss of which I believe to be the most inexpressible calamity which can fall either upon a man or upon a nation."

This great speech very nearly won the day. Up to the last it was thought the second reading of the Bill would be carried. But when all were "told" the paper was again handed to Mr. Rowland Winn in token of the further triumph of intolerance. "Ayes to the right, 289; Noes to the left, 292." Only a majority of three. But it served, and Mr. Gladstone, finally retiring from the conflict, left it to a Conservative Ministry, with a large majority at their back, in future years to consent to the quiet seating of Mr. Bradlaugh as member for Northampton.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FOURTH PARTY.

THE Fourth Party, having tasted blood, were not inclined to withdraw from the hunt, were rather prone to pursue it with added zest. In ordinary cases a Government is fronted by a regular Opposition of more or less personal ability and numerical force. It was Mr. Gladstone's ill-fortune, developed in the earliest days of his second Administration, to be faced by not one Opposition, but four. There was the regular Opposition led by Sir Stafford Northcote. There was the Fourth Party led by Lord Randolph Churchill; there were the Irish members led by Mr. Parnell; and there were sections of his own party, captained by various individuals in succession, enjoying in common the conviction that they knew a great deal better than their titular leader, and could manage Imperial and Parliamentary business with greater advantage to the State.

Of all, the Fourth Party, numerically the smallest, was the most dangerous, and through the life of the Parliament wrought more harm to Mr. Gladstone than did any other. We have seen how they engineered the Bradlaugh difficulty, compelling Sir Stafford Northcote and his colleagues on the Front Bench,

in opposition to their earlier inclinations and convictions, to fall in line behind them. Whatever might be the business the Government took in hand, whether it related to foreign affairs or home topics, the Fourth Party settled upon it with mischievous intent. Their industry was inexhaustible, their resources boundless. In the dullest intervals one of the three was certain to be found at his post, ready, if opportunity chanced, to put a spoke in the Government wheel. On field-nights they mustered their full number, playing into each other's hands with a skill and audacity that charmed an assembly always ready to be amused.

Not the least attractive feature in the entertainment was the impartial manner with which the Fourth Party, having belabored Mr. Gladstone, turned to browbeat Sir Stafford Northcote. The worm will turn at last, and one night the House was delighted by Sir Stafford, the mildest-mannered man who ever fought in the political arena, turning upon his tormentors below the gangway, and describing Lord Randolph Churchill as playing the part of "bonnet" in a game led by the Government. That was an exceptional remonstrance, wrung from his lips under direct provocation. What happened as a rule was, that Sir Stafford Northcote and his colleagues on the Front Bench, including the two statesmen scornfully described by Lord Randolph as "Marshall and Snelgrove," after betraying a disposition to tread more beaten tracks of Opposition, were hustled into follow-

ing the Fourth Party in their scamper across the country.

When they showed signs of revolt, Lord Randolph cracked the whip and they came to heel. In the Session of 1883, he published a sort of manifesto, in which he called upon Lord Salisbury to save the country by taking on himself the more vigorous leadership of the Conservative party. If he were indisposed to come forward, Lord Randolph more than hinted the difficulty might be met from other sources. But he would have none of "the bourgeois placemen, honorable Tadpoles, hungry Tapers, Irish lawyers" who compose "the body of third-rate statesmen such as were good enough to fill subordinate offices while Lord Beaconsfield was alive." The member for Woodstock, then verging on the mature age of thirty-four, was dismayed at "the series of neglected opportunities, pusillanimity, combativeness at wrong moments, vacillation, dread of responsibility, repression and discouragement of hardworking followers, collusions with the Government, hankerings after coalition, jealousies, commonplaces, and want of perception on the part of the former lieutenants of Lord Beaconsfield."

Thus did the Leader of the Fourth Party, with impartial hand, check the jubilation with which right honorable gentlemen in the Front Opposition Bench watched his lively sallies upon the Government citadel.

It must be admitted that Mr. Gladstone was himself largely responsible for bringing about the state

of things by which he and his Government were the chief sufferers. He, more than any one else, assisted to make the reputation of Lord Randolph Churchill. Had Mr. Disraeli been in his position, he would have acted as he did in the not dissimilar circumstances of the day when Lord Cranborne, afterwards Marquis of Salisbury, sat below the gangway and warned the House of Commons that "if they borrowed their political ethics from the ethics of a political adventurer they might depend upon it the whole of their representative institutions would crumble beneath their feet." Mr. Disraeli sat with folded arms and far-away look in his eyes, as if he were the last person in the world concerned in this tirade. That is not an attitude encouraging to persistent attack, and so Lord Cranborne found it. It was one impossible for Mr. Gladstone to assume. When Lord Randolph Churchill spoke at him he listened with almost pained intentness, frequently interrupted with retort or corrections. Almost inevitably, when the brilliant and audacious free lance had resumed his seat, the Premier rose to reply. With a man of Lord Randolph's sterling capacity and born Parliamentary aptitude this is all that was needed to give him a position in the House of Commons.

The Fourth Party were ready to attack the Government on all points. There was one on which they were specially effective. It is one of the traditions of English political life, more or less strictly observed, that Ministers shall not be hampered by party spirit

when administering their Foreign Policy. At certain stages foreign policy may, of course, be made the subject for debate and even of censure. But the field is one in which partisanship must yield to patriotism. Whilst this principle was applicable to ex-Ministers seated on the Front Opposition Bench, private members below the gangway were, if they pleased, free from its supervision. Lord Randolph Churchill and his merry men might nightly harass the Government with questions upon their foreign relations, or might from time to time move resolutions raising inconvenient debate. That was no affair of right honorable gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench. They were, indeed, hampered by the fact that trouble in Afghanistan and in South Africa, which early beset Mr. Gladstone, arose directly out of acts and engagements performed by them whilst they were in office. Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Henry Wolff, and Mr. Gorst wore no such shackles. It is not improbable that the opportunity of incidentally emphasizing in course of debate the errors and incompetencies of their own esteemed leaders when in office lent fresh zest to the pursuit of their successors struggling in the meshes inherited.

One of the incidents in Lord Beaconsfield's hankering after "a scientific frontier" to the north of our Indian Empire was the Treaty of Gandamak, signed on the 5th of May, 1879, with the Ameer of Afghanistan. By this engagement Great Britain undertook to pay the Ameer £60,000 a year, supporting him

against any foreign enemy with money, arms, and men. The only foreign enemy possible was Russia, who was by this Convention fondly supposed to have received a serious check at the hands of the great British statesman. In consideration of the bribe, Yakoob Khan, Ameer at the time, consented to receive a British envoy in residence at Cabul, and to meet Lord Beaconsfield's views in the matter of the scientific frontier.

There followed in rapid succession the massacre at Cabul of Louis Cavagnari and his helpless staff; the fresh occupation of Cabul by British troops; the deposition of Yakoob Khan; the whole of Afghanistan up in arms, at least three chieftains fighting for the crown. Scarcely had the Liberal Government settled down to work, when news came of the defeat of British forces in Afghanistan, the rout at Maiwand, and the flight of the remnant of the forces to find doubtful refuge in Kandahar. Next it was known that Ayoub Khan, following up his triumph at Maiwand, was beleaguering Kandahar with forces that hopelessly overmastered its little garrison.

Obviously this was a state of things for which Mr. Gladstone and his Government had no responsibility. It was, in fact, the legacy of a policy which, when in Opposition, he had vigorously fought. Speaking at Edinburgh in 1884, he said: "A long series of illustrious statesmen in the office of Governor-General, including in one case at least — perhaps in more — a Tory statesman, the excellent Lord

Mayo, labored with an unwearied patience to efface the memory of the former error and the former crime, and to build up relations of peace and amity with the brave mountaineers of Afghanistan. But under the policy of the two last years of Lord Beaconsfield's Government this was all reversed; and by an undertaking which, I think, united criminality and folly in a higher degree than any undertaking in my recollection, the United Kingdom of Afghanistan was broken to pieces; its valleys were deluged with blood, its people were again provoked into hatred of England; and if anything could by possibility have effectually promoted that supposed ambition of Russia — if anything could have made the ambition of Russia really formidable — it was undoubtedly the chance of throwing the people of Afghanistan by our hostile measures into the arms of the Emperor."

That had been his view of the situation set forth whilst the seed was being sown which blossomed in the battle of Maiwand. But the British public do not look too closely into cause and effect, more especially when the matters at issue relate to Foreign Policy. Under Mr. Gladstone's Premiership, British arms in India had suffered a crushing defeat, and, in some measure insensibly, certainly effectively, Mr. Gladstone and his Government were regarded as responsible for the reverse. Nor did they profit by the brilliant success of Sir Frederick Roberts in his famous march on Kandahar. That was all to the

credit of the General and the British army, who had, not for the first time in history, come to the rescue of a belated, incompetent Ministry.

Darker and more permanent in its effect was the cloud rising in South Africa which fell over the still young Government. Majuba Hill, like Maiwand, was a direct result of the policy of the preceding Government, against which Mr. Gladstone had in vain lifted up his voice. In 1877, at a time when the Jingo fever was at its height, Sir Theophilus Shepstone was sent out by Lord Carnarvon to inquire into the condition of affairs in the Transvaal Republic. Sir Theophilus, not unmindful of Lord Carnarvon's cherished dream of South African Confederation under the British Crown, promptly settled the Boers' business by hoisting the British flag in their territory. As Mr. Gladstone described it at the time, "the Government annexed the Transvaal territory, inhabited by a free European, Christian, and Republican community, which they thought proper to bring within the limits of a Monarchy, although out of 8,000 persons in that Republic qualified to vote upon the subject, we were told that 6,500 protested against it."

In vain deputations from the Boers came over to England and in the home of liberty pleaded for deliverance from this act of high tyranny. They found in Mr. Gladstone an eloquent, but at the time powerless, advocate. "Is it not wonderful," he, speaking in the Midlothian Campaign that preceded

the general election, asked, "to those who are freemen, and whose fathers had been freemen, and who hope that their children will be freemen, and who consider that freedom is an essential condition of civil life, and that without it you can have nothing great and nothing noble in political society — that we are led by an Administration, and led, I admit, by Parliament, to find ourselves in this position, that we are to march upon another body of freemen, and against their will to subject them to despotic Government?"

But the thing was done, and when three months later Mr. Gladstone came into power he found the Transvaal seething with a sense of the wrong done to it. Looked back upon with the advantage of full knowledge of subsequent events, it would obviously have been better for all parties had Mr. Gladstone, on coming into office, carried into effect the opinions expressed when in opposition. There would have been an outburst of angry Jingo feeling and much talk in music halls and cutlery-manufacturing towns of "trailing the British flag in the dust." That all came in due time, with much else far more damaging. It must, however, be remembered that it is an axiom of British statesmanship that foreign policy is continuous. Ministries may come and Ministries may go, but the attitude of Great Britain towards foreign Powers and States must remain bound by whatever treaties or engagements have been entered upon.

The Gladstone Government continued to hold the Transvaal Republic in the bonds fastened upon it by the Beaconsfield Administration. Before the new Government had been in power nine months the Transvaal was up in arms and declared itself once more a Republic. Shots were fired at Potchefstrom. Colonel Anstruther, marching on Pretoria, was faced by a body of Boers whose deadly rifles in ten minutes emptied the saddles of forty officers. Ingogo followed swiftly on Lang's Nek. Then came Majuba Hill, and the spectacle of British troops fleeing before the advance of a body of Boer farmers. This was even worse than Maiwand, and, following close upon that disaster, gave a final check to the wave of popular enthusiasm that a few months earlier had carried Mr. Gladstone into power. He and his colleagues were no more responsible for Majuba Hill than they were for Maiwand. As has been shown, they had, on the contrary, done all men could do to defeat the policy that led up to these battlefields. They were at worst unlucky. But ill luck is the unpardonable sin with an Administration.

What followed on Majuba filled the cup of bitterness the British public had twice had presented to it through the as yet brief term of the new Government's existence. There was still a third trial in store. Mr. Gladstone has, in a few sentences, described the situation at the time Sir Evelyn Wood found himself at the head of overwhelming reinforcements, and Cape Town was jubilant at the expecta-

tion of seeing the Boers brought to book. "When in opposition we had," he said, "declared that in our judgment the attempt of the Administration then in power to put down the people of the Transvaal, to extinguish their freedom, and to annex them against their will to England, was a scandalous and disastrous attempt. When we got into office, we were assured by all the local agents of the British Government — and I have no doubt they spoke in honor and sincerity — that the people of the Transvaal had changed their minds, and were perfectly contented to be annexed to the British Empire. That made it our duty to pause for a while, and for a short while, accordingly, we did pause. However much we had opposed the previous Government, it was our duty not to make changes without good and sufficient cause. But before we had been very long in office, the people of the Transvaal rose in arms, and showed us pretty well what their feelings and intentions were. They obtained several successes over the limited body of British troops then in South Africa. We felt it was an absolute duty, under those circumstances, to reinforce our military power in that region; and we sent a force to South Africa, which would unquestionably have been sufficient to defeat any power that the Dutch Burghers could bring into the field against us. But the Boers asked us for an accommodation. What is called the Jingo party was horribly scandalized because we listened to that application. We had got our forces there ready to

chastise them. We might have shed their blood, we might have laid prostrate on the field hundreds, possibly thousands, of that small community, and then we should have vindicated the reputation of this country, according to that creed of the particular party. Having undoubted power in our hands, we thought that the time to be merciful is when you are strong. We were strong; we could afford to be merciful. We entered into arrangements with the Transvaal, and the Transvaal recovered its independence."

When the terms of the armistice agreed upon by Sir Evelyn Wood were announced in the House of Commons, the Fourth Party were frantic with indignation. Lord Randolph Churchill could scarcely find parliamentary phrases in which to denounce the conduct of a Minister who had thus dishonored England, and betrayed our countrymen at the Cape. Many years later Lord Randolph visited South Africa, spent some time in the Transvaal, and made himself personally acquainted with the existing state of things. He had the courage and the generosity publicly to admit that in 1881 he had been wrong, and Mr. Gladstone had been right. Looking upon the whole transaction free from prejudice and with fuller knowledge, he saw in the action of the Gladstone Government, following on Majuba, not an act of degradation, but an outcome of statesmanship inspired by the loftiest motives, calculated to raise England still higher in the eyes of the civilized world.

That was very good and very true for the year 1892. But in the year 1881, the Fourth Party, in the House of Commons and out of it, taunted Mr. Gladstone with having betrayed and dishonored the country, sedulously fanning the breeze of unpopularity already chilling enthusiasm on the Treasury Bench.

CHAPTER XIII.

EGYPT.

PERHAPS the most notable thing in Mr. Gladstone's second Administration is that he, a man of peace, his foreign policy broadly based on the principle of non-intervention, should have suffered continuously from foreign complications. Hardly had the murmurs round the Transvaal capitulation begun to die away than there arose trouble in a fresh quarter — trouble that lasted to the end, and faced Mr. Gladstone once more when, in 1892, he again assumed the Leadership of the House of Commons.

As in Afghanistan and South Africa, the difficulties of the Gladstone Government in Egypt were a legacy from their predecessors. It was Lord Beaconsfield who had intervened in Egypt, joining in a copartnership with France which proved unworkable, engendering irritation that more than once threatened open rupture. As early as 1875 Mr. Disraeli made the first dazzling stroke in the Anglo-Egyptian policy by the purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal. Close upon this followed the despatch of Mr. Stephen Cave on a mission of inquiry into the state of Egyptian finance. Ismail Pacha, with an eye to a fresh loan, had invited the British Government to send out a capable authority.

It was no particular business of Great Britain or of the Government which administered its affairs. But the proposal was very popular in the City, and the Government selected for the post one of their own colleagues. It is true that on undertaking the special mission Mr. Cave resigned the office of Judge Advocate-General. That, indeed, was inevitable. He was nevertheless a confidential emissary of the British Government, carrying with him the authority of an ex-Minister.

The rest followed with regular steps. Mr. Cave having returned and reported, Mr. Rivers Wilson, Controller of the National Debt Office, was sent out to advise the Khedive. A joint mission, arranged by French and English bondholders, repaired to Cairo. In 1876, Ismail, growing suspicious of the toils closing round him, asserted his independence, brought back Nubar Pacha from exile, and shortly after dismissed him, packing off with him Mr. Rivers Wilson and M. Blignières, the English and French Ministers imposed upon him. This was too much for the allied Powers. They drove Ismail from his throne and his palaces, placed his son Tewfik on the throne, reinstated their joint Ministers, and proposed to govern Egypt for the Egyptians.

Such was the state of affairs when the Gladstone Ministry came into power at the end of April, 1880. "We found the Khedive upon the throne," says Mr. Gladstone. "We found a solemn engagement from the British Government to maintain him on the

throne." The value of this pledge was soon tested. Early in January, 1883, an identical Note was addressed to the Khedive by the British and French Governments, avowing their determination to ward off by united effort all causes of external or internal complication which might menace the *régime* established in Egypt. Since Tewfik was placed on the throne, there had grown up a national party in Egypt which fretted under what was known as the Dual Control. In June, riot broke out in the streets of Alexandria. There was a brisk flight of Europeans out of Egypt. The Khedive was removed to Alexandria and there set up his trembling Court. Gambetta, one of the sponsors of the Dual Control, was out of office. His successor, M. de Freycinet, was opposed to active interference in the internal affairs of Egypt. The national party in Egypt had found their leader in Arabi Pacha, who, having been forced upon the Khedive in the position of War Minister, began to place Alexandria in a position to resist the encroachments of foreign Powers. On the 10th of July, Sir Beauchamp Seymour, in command of the British fleet, handed in an ultimatum announcing that unless the forts at Alexandria were surrendered the fleet would open fire upon them. The notice expired at seven o'clock on the morning of July 11th, and punctually on the stroke of the hour the war-ships thundered. The French fleet, which in outward and visible sign of the Dual Control had been sharing sentinel duty with the British ships,

steamed away out of sight, in ostentatious notification that it would have nothing to do with the business.

The Egyptian guns, though of fine calibre, well mounted and well served, could not long withstand the fire of the eight ironclads and five gunboats which formed the British fleet. The fortifications were abandoned. Arabi withdrew with his forces inland, and for two days Alexandria was given up to rapine, finally stamped out by a force of British blue-jackets and marines. Arabi entrenched himself near Tel-el-Kebir, whither he was followed by Sir Garnet Wolseley. At dawn on the morning of September 13th the little British army stole upon the Egyptian camp, carrying their first line of defence at the point of the bayonet. In half an hour it was all over. Arabi's chance was gone, and he a prisoner. Cairo, which had been held for Arabi, was taken without a struggle. Tewfik was escorted back to his palace, and the occupation of Egypt by the British actually commenced.

Whilst British troops were barracked at Cairo and Alexandria, and a British fleet guarded the waterways of Egypt, a pretty fiction was maintained at the Foreign Office, that England had really nothing to do with Egyptian affairs save to perform the policeman's part and keep order in the streets of Cairo. The Soudan, long in revolt against Egyptian rule, was in 1882 in full rebellion under the influence of the Mahdi. The Egyptian Government

placed Hicks Pacha, an English officer, in command of a motley army, and sent him to meet the Mahdi. He got no further than Kashgeil, where he fell fighting, his army annihilated. The news ran through the Soudan with that miraculous celerity peculiar to Eastern communities. The whole country was aflame. Khartoum, Sinkat, and Tokar, towns garrisoned by Egyptian troops, were beleaguered by the Mahdi's forces. Berber, Dongola, and Kassala were threatened. Appeals were made to Lord Granville for advice and assistance. But the Home Government were in almost as difficult a place as the garrison at Khartoum. France watched every movement in Egypt with angry suspicion. Worse still, there was a strong body of the Ministerial party in the House of Commons who resented the continued occupation of Egypt, and would have gone into open revolt had active operations at this time been extended to the Soudan.

Advice Lord Granville gave, recommending the Egyptian Government to abandon all territory south of Wady Halfa. But as for money and troops — God bless you! — he had none to give. "Her Majesty's Government," the Foreign Secretary wrote in a despatch dated 30th December, "has no intention of employing British or Indian troops in the Soudan." The Egyptian Government, thus left to themselves, did nothing. The Mahdi did much, his power increasing every day, the position of the beleaguered garrisons growing more critical.

At length Lord Granville, insisting that the Soudan should be abandoned, proposed to send a British officer to Khartoum to make arrangements for the future Government of the country and the withdrawal of the garrisons. The post being offered to General Gordon, he promptly accepted it, and, as swiftly as a dromedary could carry him, made his way to Khartoum, where he was known of old, having worked in the Soudan for three years, engaged in battling with the slave trade. The population of Khartoum received him with wild enthusiasm. For a while it seemed that confidence in his hold over the Soudanese would be justified, and that his work would be accomplished without bloodshed. Meanwhile, Baker Pacha, who had set out to fight the Mahdi's lieutenant, Osman Digna, and relieve the garrison at Suakim, was routed at Teb. Later came news that Tewfik Pacha, making a sortie from Sinkat, had been cut to pieces, scarcely a man of his famished garrison left to tell the tale.

These events forced the hand of the British Government, pricking the bladder in which rattled their protest that they had nothing to do with the Soudan. Admiral Hewitt assumed supreme command in the Soudan, and General Graham marched on Trinkitat with a British force four thousand strong. Every inch of the ground was disputed by the Arabs under Osman Digna. At one time it seemed that Graham and his gallant army would be treated even as Hicks Pacha and his Egyptians had been. Advancing on

Osman Digna encamped at Tamanieb, the British fell into an ambuscade. The Arabs dashed over their square like the Atlantic in a storm sweeps a ship's deck. For a while it seemed that all was lost. But the temporarily swamped square reformed. The second square came to its assistance. The Arabs were beaten off and Osman Digna was driven further into the desert.

Meanwhile the Government at home were attacked with no less bitterness than were the squares of British soldiers, specks in the desert of the Soudan. Immediately on news of the fall of Sinkat reaching London, votes of censure were moved in the Lords by the Marquis of Salisbury, and in the Commons by Sir Stafford Northcote. For a whole week the battle raged in the Commons, and when a division was taken only 311 mustered for the defence of the Government against 292 voting with the Opposition. Thus was the Ministerial majority reduced to 19. A month later there was another vote of censure, Mr. Labouchere joining Lord Randolph Churchill in attacking the Ministerial policy in Egypt. There had been a Saturday sitting in order to make some progress with sadly delayed supply. The battle raged till six o'clock on Sunday morning, when the majority for the Ministry was further reduced to 17.

Anxiety about the position of General Gordon at Khartoum grew. He had evidently caught a Tartar. Going out to Khartoum to administer affairs in the Soudan, he was shut up within the town, the Mahdi's

men massed in invulnerable belt around him. On the 17th of May Lord Granville directed the Chargé d'Affaires at Cairo to inform Gordon that as the plan for the evacuation of Khartoum had been abandoned and as no aggressive operations against the Mahdi were contemplated, he should consider how best to remove himself and his garrison from Khartoum. At this time, as Mr. Gladstone has testified, there was no evidence available by the Government that Gordon was in danger within the walls of Khartoum. "We believed," Mr. Gladstone said, "and I think we had reason to believe from his own expressions, that it was in the power of General Gordon to remove himself and those immediately associated with him from Khartoum by going to the south. General Gordon said himself, speaking of it as a thing distinctly within his own power, that he would in certain contingencies withdraw to the Equator. From the unhappy interruption of the telegraph we did not know, and could not estimate, the relations which General Gordon may have formed with others than those who were immediately associated with his own party."

As the days passed and resembled each other inasmuch as they brought no news from Gordon, public anxiety deepened. On the eve of the Prorogation in August, 1884, though the Government still clung to the expression of belief that there was no necessity for an expedition to relieve Gordon, they were careful to obtain a vote to cover the expenditure should

it appear necessary. Conviction of the urgency of the case seems to have grown apace. On the 5th of August a vote had been asked for explicitly as a matter of precaution. Two days later, as Mr. Gladstone has testified — on the 7th of August by telegram and on the 8th of August in a full and detailed paper — instructions sent by the Secretary for War on the part of the Government, were despatched to Egypt. "From that moment," Mr. Gladstone says, "military preparations were never relaxed. The operations were continuous. I believe it would not be found possible to say that from that date forward any delay that could be avoided occurred. While our preparations were being made we did think the evidence reached a point which showed that a movement forward was necessary. That movement forward was directed, I think, about the 23rd of August, and either on that date or immediately after, General Lord Wolseley undertook the command of the expedition to Egypt."

On the 28th of January, 1885, Sir Charles Wilson arrived at Khartoum with a rescue party to find themselves too late. Two days earlier the citadel had fallen, and amongst the slain was the gallant Gordon.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PENJDEH INCIDENT.

As if Egypt were not burden enough for a Government to carry, trouble threatened on the Afghan frontier. As the result of patient negotiation, a Commission had been appointed for the delimitation of the Afghan frontier. Whilst the work of the Commission was quietly going forward, news came of an event delicately referred to in Parliamentary debate as the Penjdeh incident. On the 16th of March, 1884, an agreement had been entered into between British and Russian Commissioners covenanting that providing the Afghans did not advance or attack, the Russian troops would remain quiescent. On the 30th of March the Russians advanced on Penjdeh, and after a bloody battle drove out the Afghans.

This news reached London on the 9th of April, and created something like a panic. In view of British engagements to the Ameer, entered into by Lord Beaconsfield's Government, this assault was equivalent to an act of war. England, as we have seen, had pledged herself to support the Ameer against any foreign enemy with money, arms, and men. Here was the foreign enemy in active work, and the Ameer would look to England for fulfilment of its

solemn engagement. There was panic on the Stock Exchange, consternation at Westminster. A Cabinet Council was hastily summoned and sat up to the moment at which public business commenced in the House of Commons. Members assembled found the Treasury Bench tenantless as far as its chiefs were concerned. Sir William Harcourt entered shortly after half-past four, but Mr. Gladstone still tarried. Sir Stafford Northcote sat in his place on the other side of the table, obviously primed with momentous questions as to the truth of the rumors that darkened the air. Sir William Harcourt was on his feet, making some observations with obvious intent to keep the field open till the Premier should arrive, when Mr. Gladstone hurriedly entered. Amid breathless silence he stated the facts as far as they had reached the Government. He was evidently oppressed with the imminence of crisis. A heated word might serve as the match to the powder-barrel. He contented himself with reading, in a studiously matter-of-fact manner, the despatches that had come from far-off Afghanistan — those addressed to the Government by Sir Peter Lumsden, those communicated to Lord Granville by the Russian Minister.

The self-command displayed by the Prime Minister gave tone to feeling in the House. The occasion was too solemn, the issue too grave for noisy demonstration. Mr. Gladstone having made his statement in studiously unadorned phrase, the House almost gratefully went into Committee of Supply, discussing proposals for new

offices for the departments of the Army and the Navy, with as little show of emotion as if they had not a few minutes earlier almost heard the roll of the drum and the blare of the trumpet calling to battle.

Twelve days later the House was again crowded and excited. The Easter Recess was at hand, Parliament would be separated for ten days. No one could say what would happen in the interval. The Government, resolved to be prepared for the worst, asked for a vote of credit for not less than eleven and a half millions sterling.

"We have labored," said Mr. Gladstone in solemn voice, "and we will continue to labor for an honorable settlement by pacific means. But one thing I may venture to say with regard to the sad contingency of an outbreak of war, or a rupture of relations between two great Powers such as Russia and England — one thing I will say with great strength of conviction and great earnestness in my endeavor to impress it upon the Committee, that we will strive to conduct ourselves to the end of this diplomatic controversy in such a way as that, if unhappily it is to end in violence or rupture, we may at least be able to challenge the verdict of civilized mankind, upon a review of the demands and refusals, to say whether we have or whether we have not done all that men could do, by every just and honorable effort, to prevent the plunging of two such countries, with all the millions that own their sway, into bloodshed and strife."

On the 27th of April the Committee met to deal with the final stage of the vote of credit. The Premier was at this time suffering from an affection of the voice, which seemed to threaten imposition of silence. He spoke with difficulty, and with painful hoarseness. But as he proceeded to explain the necessity for this colossal vote he mastered his infirmity. "What has happened?" he asked, looking round at the faces set in serried ranks intently watching. "A bloody engagement on the 30th of March followed the covenant of the 16th. I shall overstate nothing. At least I shall not purposely overstate anything. I hope I shall not inadvertently overstate anything. All I shall say is this — that the woeful engagement on the 30th of March distinctly showed that one party or both had, either through ill-will or unfortunate mishap, failed to fulfil the conditions of the engagement. We considered it to be, and we still consider it to be, the duty of both countries, and, above all I will say, for the honor of both countries, to examine how and by whose fault this calamity came about. I will have no foregone conclusion, I will not anticipate that we are in the right. Although I feel perfect confidence in the honor and intelligence of our officers, I will not now assume that they may not have been misled. I will prepare myself for the issue; and I will abide by it as far as I can in a spirit of impartiality. But what I say is this — that those who have caused such an engagement to fail, ought to become known to their own Government, and to the other contracting

Government. I will not say that we are even now in possession of all the facts of the case. But we are in possession of many; and we are in possession of facts which create in our minds impressions unfavorable to the conduct of some of those who form the other party in these negotiations. However, I will not wilfully deviate from the strictest principles of justice in anticipating anything as to the ultimate issue of that fair inquiry which we are desirous of prosecuting, and endeavoring to prosecute. The cause of that deplorable collision may be uncertain. What is certain is that the attack was a Russian attack. Whose was the provocation is a matter of the utmost consequence. We only know that the attack was a Russian attack. We know that the Afghans suffered in life, in spirit, and in repute. We know that a blow was struck at the credit and the authority of a Sovereign — our ally — our protected ally — who had committed no offence. All I say is we cannot in that state of things close this book and say: 'We will look into it no more.'"

As he spoke the Premier had a blue-book before him from which he had been quoting. Suiting the action to the word he closed the book and heavily smote the cover as he exclaimed, "We will look into it no more." Slowly re-opening it he added in low, deliberate voice, "We must do our best to have right done in the matter."

A ringing cheer approved this determination. For awhile there were neither Liberals nor Conservatives

among the Commons. They were all one in patriotic feeling, the heat of Mr. Gladstone's noble eloquence having welded them into a mass of Englishmen. The vote was agreed to without comment other than was expressed by a fresh outburst of cheering that had for undertone an unusual note of sternness. There was no mistaking the attitude of the Government, thus backed up by a unanimous Parliament. Business was clearly meant. Russia, observing this, climbed down, and on the 4th of May Mr. Gladstone was able to announce that impediments to friendly correspondence with Russia had been removed, and the two Governments had agreed to refer to the judgment of the Sovereign of a friendly State any difference that might be found to exist.

This was tragedy. It was lightened by a touch of comedy applied between the two sittings of the Committee on the vote of credit. On the 24th of April the public, living in a highly strained condition, were freshly alarmed by report that the French Government, as a preliminary to active hostilities with this country, had withdrawn their consul from Cairo. Sir Stafford Northcote inquired whether the Government were able to confirm this rumor. "No," said Mr. Gladstone, with a look of genuine surprise. "We have no information to that effect."

The House was undisguisedly glad to hear this. War with Russia apparently imminent, the prospect of France taking up arms was grave indeed. Questions had proceeded through their ordinary course,

when the crowded House observed Mr. Gladstone intently reading a note passed along the Treasury Bench to his hand. He was evidently perturbed, and after a moment's hesitation rose. Since he had replied to Sir Stafford Northcote's question, he had, he said, received information that a telegram had reached London announcing that "the French Chargé d'Affaires left Cairo this morning." The House was profoundly moved. A buzz of excited conversation filled the Chamber.

Half an hour later came explanation of the portentous news. Peremptory instructions had been left at the Foreign Office that any telegrams received from Cairo should be despatched to the Premier in the House of Commons without a moment's delay. One coming from Sir Evelyn Baring was, to save time, sent off in batches as it arrived. The first message Mr. Gladstone received from Cairo ran thus: "This morning the French Chargé d'Affaires left." This was the news that had clouded his brow and which he had made haste to communicate to the House. Ten minutes later there was handed to the astonished Premier the conclusion of the message — "some papers for my consideration."

This was a happy conclusion of a matter trivial in itself, but indicative of the high pressure at which Ministers worked at this epoch.

CHAPTER XV.

THE IRISH PARTY.

WHEN the Parliament elected in 1874 met, Mr. Butt, chieftain of the then newly designated Home Rule party, found himself leader of fifty-nine members. The general election of 1880 placed Mr. Parnell in the position of Captain of the Home Rule party, now mustering sixty-two on a division. The whole condition of affairs, as far as the Irish members were concerned, was altered as compared with the not far distant days of Mr. Butt. Mr. Parnell was a general of different calibre from the genial, eloquent Q.C. of the early days of the Parliament of 1874. Under Mr. Parnell's direction organization was complete and authority absolute. The Ministerial majority, as has been shown, was so overwhelming that even with the assistance of the Conservative Opposition Mr. Parnell could not make them kick the beam. That was a power he was to hold later.

At the outset Mr. Gladstone had a majority of 56 over any possible combination between Home Rulers and Conservatives. Fresh from their constituencies, the Irish members brought pitiful stories of the state of things in Ireland. The Land Act of 1870 had failed to bring about that era of peace and prosperity sanguinely hoped from it. Evictions were of common

occurrence and were increasing. The year preceding the Dissolution they, for the first time in history, over-leaped the boundary of a thousand. In 1880 they exceeded two thousand, and as the life of the Parliament extended the number increased.

In the autumn of 1879 the Irish National Land League, a potent factor in subsequent history of the Agrarian Question in Ireland, was formed under the auspices of Mr. Davitt. In English constituencies the Irish vote had at the general election been given to Liberal members, and had in some cases undoubtedly swelled the Ministerial ranks. This action was taken under Mr. Parnell's direction, not because he mistrusted Mr. Gladstone less, but because he hated Lord Beaconsfield more. The latter had heralded the general election by a letter addressed to the Duke of Marlborough, in which he described the Home Rule movement as "scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine," and had called upon "all men of light and leading," to assist him in "resisting the policy of decomposition supported by the Liberal party, and maintain the imperial character of Great Britain." The coat being thus ostentatiously trailed, the Irish members made haste to jump on it. Lord Beaconsfield routed, they urged that the undoubted assistance they had rendered Mr. Gladstone in pulverizing the Conservative majority established a claim for special consideration in the programme of the Session.

The Government made some response by announcing in the Queen's Speech that the Peace Preserva-

tion Act would not be renewed. They also promised a measure extending the Irish Borough Franchise. This was well as far as it went. But it did not go far enough for the Irish members, and not at all in the particular direction they desired. They wanted a new Land Bill, or, failing that, prompt action taken to stay the plague of eviction. It was grimly indicative of the new spirit animating them under Mr. Parnell's leadership that, instead of following immemorial usage and crossing the floor of the House when the Liberal party, with whom they ostensibly worked on lines of general policy, came into office, they remained in the seats below the gangway occupied by them during the former Parliament. Some of the more moderate men, like Mr. Shaw, *ad interim* Leader between Mr. Butt and Mr. Parnell, Mr. Mitchell Henry, and Sir Patrick O'Brien, crossed over and sat with the Liberals.

On the Address Mr. O'Connor Power moved an amendment demanding that the Irish Land Question should forthwith be dealt with. This did not prove a very serious movement, as appears from the fact that the debate collapsed at eleven o'clock on this its first night, only forty-seven members going into the division lobby in support of the amendment.

Things growing worse and worse in Ireland, Mr. Forster brought in a Bill authorizing County Court Judges, for a limited period, to award compensation to tenants evicted for non-payment of rent in cases where failure of crops had caused insolvency. The

Chief Secretary did not acquit himself very well in what was undeniably a difficult position. There was much wobbling in Committee, Mr. Forster being on one side squeezed by the Irish members wanting more, and on the other threatened by the Conservatives with dire consequences if he did not accept amendments designed to make the measure inoperative. Lord Randolph Churchill, much to the fore just then, described the measure as having been "brought in in a panic for the futile purpose of expediting Government business by pacifying the Irish members." After much trouble and the occupation of a measure of time that upset the programme of the Session, the Compensation for Disturbance Bill was read a third time, and sent up to the House of Lords. It reached them on the 3rd of August, and was promptly thrown out by a majority of 231.

This action was received by the Irish members as a declaration of open war. Nothing loath, they drew the sword, and threw away the scabbard. Mr. John Dillon, posting off to Ireland, delivered at Kildare a speech Mr. Forster described in the House as "wicked and cowardly." Mr. Dillon, returning to Westminster, moved the adjournment of the House in order to reply to Mr. Forster's attack. This led to an animated debate, in which Mr. Forster took truculent part. The Irish members had now, to the delight of the Conservatives, finally broken with the Liberal Government. In what remained of the Session they took every opportunity of attacking Mr.

Forster's administration. It was in these late August days of the opening Session of the new Parliament there was first heard in the House of Commons the cry of "Buckshot! Buckshot!" angrily directed against the Quaker Minister.

The winter was a black one in Ireland. The class of landlords who had swelled the list of evictions, finding themselves sustained by the action of the Lords, ran them up with freer hand. By the end of the year there was record of 2,110 families turned out on the roadside. The Land League, growing in numbers and in power, held meetings all over the country, advising tenants whose rents were fixed above Griffiths's valuation, to pay no rent and passively resist eviction. Attention was concentrated on the case of Captain Boycott, agent of Lord Erne, farming a considerable acreage at Lough Mask. He having served notices upon some of Lord Erne's tenants, the countryside, with one consent, agreed it would hold no communication with him. None would work for him. None would sell him food or fetch him water. The Ulster Orangemen responded to his cry for help by despatching a body of armed men to gather in his imperilled harvest. The unhappy Chief Secretary apprehending disturbance when the emergency men came within pistol shot of the peasants of Connemara, hastily despatched a small army to keep the peace. A blow was struck in another direction, the officials of the Land League being indicted for seditious conspiracy. Amongst those

who stood in the dock on this charge were Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. Sexton, and Mr. Biggar, all members of the House of Commons. The jury, as might have been expected, did not agree on a verdict, and amid the huzzas of the Dublin populace, the prisoners were set free.

A winter of such discontent was not harbinger of peace in the spring. Parliament was summoned to meet on the 6th of January, an unusually early date. Of two measures in a long list, upon which attention was chiefly centred, both related to Ireland. One was a new Coercion Bill, the other a Land Bill, a nicely balancing arrangement which, with the fatality that seemed to dog the steps of the Government, succeeded in enraging both sections of the Opposition. Mr. Gladstone announced that priority should be given to the Coercion measures, which were divided into two Bills, one For the Better Protection of Persons and Property in Ireland, the other Amending the Law relating to the Carrying and Possession of Arms. On Monday, the 24th January, Mr. Forster introduced the Coercion measure, which he studiously called the Protection Bill. On the next day Mr. Gladstone moved a resolution giving priority to the Bill till it should have passed all its stages. The resolution was carried by 251 votes against 33, a conclusion arrived at only at the close of a sitting that had lasted uninterruptedly for twenty-two hours, in the course of which Mr. Biggar succeeded in getting himself suspended under the new rules of procedure.

CHAPTER XVI.

SUSPENSION OF THIRTY-SEVEN MEMBERS.

THIS was the beginning of some memorable scenes. Day by day through the week the Government, supported by the Conservative Opposition, slowly pressed through the motion for leave to introduce the Coercion Bill; the Irish members dashing themselves with wild fury against the rare alliance of forces. On Monday, the 31st of January, the Parnellites, invigorated by a couple of days' recess, returned to the fight with renewed energy. At that time, the closure not having been adopted, they were, within certain limits, masters of the situation. Their plan of campaign was to move an amendment, upon which the thirty-six members faithful to Mr. Parnell should in succession make speeches, each holding forth as long as physical energy and flux of words enabled him. When each had had his say, and the conspiracy of silence on the Ministerial benches had been broken by a Minister uttering the fewest possible words by way of reply, the House divided. Immediately afterwards an Irishman moved the adjournment of the debate, and the whole thing went forward again.

It was evident that this was a case in which the battle would be to the strong. It was simply a matter of physical endurance. The Parnellites

divided themselves into watches, after the fashion of a ship's crew. Whilst some slept others remained at their posts, keeping the thing going. Hour followed hour, night day, and day night. On Tuesday afternoon, the House having been in session uninterruptedly for twenty-four hours, Lord Beaconsfield paid a rare visit to the scene. Looking down from the Peers' Gallery on the wearied face of Mr. Gladstone, seated on the Treasury Bench, he, with new application of his historical phrase, doubtless thanked Heaven there was a House of Lords.

The necessity of working in shifts was also enforced upon the Chair, the Speaker and Mr. Lyon Playfair, then Chairman of Committees, taking turn and turn about. Mr. Bright bore his share of the burden on the Treasury Bench, speaking more than once with a bitterness that galled to the quick Irishmen who had, in other times, learned to look upon him as their country's champion. All through Tuesday night the hurly-burly continued. At nine o'clock on Wednesday morning the wearied House quickened with swift apprehension that a crisis was at hand. Mr. Gladstone had just arrived, looking pale and stern. Rapidly the Treasury Bench filled up. There was an ominous muster on the Front Opposition Bench of right honorable gentlemen who, throughout the prolonged scene, had been insistent upon action being taken to restore the dignity of the House. Mr. Lyon Playfair was in the Chair, which he had occupied all the night. Towards six o'clock

in the morning, Mr. Biggar, who had passed his "watch below" on a couple of chairs in the library, reappeared and cheerily informed the House that he "had had a good sleep and came back like a giant refreshed." At nine o'clock the member for Cavan was again on his feet, saying nothing at interminable length. His remarks were broken in upon by a sudden, swift, triumphant cheer. Looking up, Mr. Biggar saw the Speaker in wig and gown making stately progress to the chair.

Mr. Lyon Playfair vacated the seat and the Speaker, with stern cry of "Order! Order!" motioned Mr. Biggar to resume his seat, an order which that gentleman, in a moment of weakness begotten of surprise, obeyed. The Speaker, reading from a manuscript held in a hand that visibly shook with emotion, observed that the proposal to bring in the Protection Bill had been under discussion for five days, the opposition throughout that time being purely obstructive. Under existing rules the Chair was impotent to withstand these tactics. The Speaker had therefore resolved to take upon himself the responsibility of ending the conflict by declining to call upon any member who might present himself with intention of continuing the discussion, and would forthwith put the question.

This announcement was received with tumultuous cheering, which drowned the shrill protest of the Irish members. It was an amendment moved by Dr. Lyons that chanced at the time to be under dis-

cussion. On a division it was negatived by 164 to 19, the minority representing "the watch on deck" of the Parnellites, the captain himself chancing at this time to be in his berth. The Speaker next put the main question, that leave be given to bring in the Bill. Mr. Justin McCarthy rose to reopen debate on this new issue. The Speaker, rising at the same time, met the interposition with the cry of "Order! Order!" and proceeded to put the question. Whereupon the Irish members, rising to their feet, shouted "Privilege! Privilege!" and, bowing with ceremonious respect to the Chair, left the House. The Chamber still echoing with their new battle-cry, Mr. Forster promptly brought in the Bill, which was read a second time, and the House adjourned, after having sat continuously for forty-one hours.

It being Wednesday, the Standing Orders, disregarding the unexampled events of the week, necessitated a fresh sitting at noon. The Speaker was punctually in his place, the House densely crowded. Mr. Parnell on entering was wildly cheered by the full force of his party. He proposed to move a resolution declaring that Mr. Speaker, in peremptorily closing debate, had committed a breach of the privileges of the House. The Speaker pointed out that the question not being one of privilege, but one of order, might be submitted only in the usual way after due notice. The wrangle continued till the hour was reached when, happily, on Wednesdays, debate automatically stands adjourned.

On the next day the storm raged with even wilder force. News had reached Westminster that at one o'clock Mr. Davitt had been arrested. The business of the day as proposed by Ministers was a motion by the Prime Minister, giving precedence to the Protection Bill on the ground of urgency. The Parnellites, masters of Parliamentary strategy, were determined to make the most of what period of comparative impunity was left to them. Mr. Gladstone, in obedience to a call from the Speaker, had risen to move his resolution. He had not proceeded through many sentences when Mr. Dillon, from his place below the gangway, began to speak. He was met by an outburst of stormy cries of "Order! Order!" The Speaker was on his feet motioning him to sit down. Mr. Dillon folding his arms, stood silent, motionless, defiant. So he stood whilst the Speaker "named him" as being guilty of wilful and persistent obstruction. Mr. Gladstone moved the consequent motion "that Mr. Dillon be suspended from the service of the House." A division was challenged, 33 opposing the motion, 395 trooping out into the other lobby in support of Law and Order.

Then followed a scene unprecedented even in these strange times. The Speaker, having repeated the figures of the division, called upon Mr. Dillon to withdraw. "I respectfully decline to withdraw," said Mr. Dillon. The injunction being repeated, and the defiance renewed, the Speaker called upon the Sergeant-at-Arms to remove the hon. member.

The Sergeant-at-Arms advanced to the corner of the bench on which Mr. Dillon was seated and awaited his surrender. Mr. Dillon did not budge. At a sign from the Sergeant-at-Arms, four of the white-cravatted, gold-chained, elderly, respectable gentlemen who serve as messengers in the House of Commons marched up shoulder to shoulder. Physically it was not an imposing demonstration of force. As was observed at the time, in echo of occasional obituary notices in *The Times*, "their united ages would have amounted to two hundred and sixty years." But at sight of them Mr. Dillon at once surrendered, and amid cheers from the Ministerialists, and cries of "Shame!" "Cowards!" from the Parnellites, he withdrew.

Again Mr. Gladstone attempted to continue his speech. The O'Donoghue, at this period of his varied career ranking as a Parnellite, moved the adjournment of the debate. The Speaker ruled that Mr. Gladstone was in possession of the House. "I move," shouted Mr. Parnell, "that the right hon. gentleman be not heard." The Speaker warned Mr. Parnell that his conduct was obstructive, and if persisted in, notice must be taken of it. Mr. Parnell, white with passion, rose again and insisted upon being heard. "I name Mr. Parnell as disregarding the authority of the Chair," said the Speaker.

The piece of paper on which the terms of the motion for suspension had been written out was hastily passed up to the Premier, who moved

Mr. Parnell's suspension. A division being challenged, the usual order to clear the House was given. The Parnellites had a fresh surprise in store for outraged authority. They declined to leave their places, remaining seated whilst 405 members crowded the "Aye" lobby, seven members going the other way. The Speaker declaring "the Ayes have it" called upon Mr. Parnell to withdraw. Mr. Parnell, not less respectfully than Mr. Dillon, refused to obey. The Sergeant-at-Arms again appeared with summons to retire. The Irish Leader was not to be removed with anything less in the way of overpowering demonstration than had been forthcoming in the case of his lieutenant. Accordingly once more the four elderly messengers were mustered and marched up the House, indomitable, irresistible. At sight of them Mr. Parnell's scruples vanished, and he quietly left the House.

After this what followed partook of the character of anti-climax. The full muster of Parnellites was thirty-seven. One by one in succession they revolted against the authority of the Chair, were suspended, and marched forth. Some insisted on the full panoply of the four messengers. Others, more considerate, sparing the officials addition to physical labor which, in the case of the two seniors, had evidently begun to tell, were content to follow the unsupported bidding of the Sergeant-at-Arms. After the first two hours the process began to pall on the jaded palate. But there still remained an hour and a half

before the glass doors had closed on the last of the recalcitrants.

Order now reigning in Warsaw, Mr. Gladstone succeeded in the accomplishment of his often-interrupted task.

CHAPTER XVII.

RESIGNATION OF MR. FORSTER.

In the following Session (1882), the relations of the Government with Ireland and the Irish members reached even an acuter phase. The Land Bill, passed by Herculean efforts, in which Mr. Gladstone had personally borne the lion's share, failed to pacify Ireland. The National Land League was in active force. Shortly after the prorogation, a Land League Convention held in Dublin was attended by 1,300 delegates, trooping in from all parts of Ireland. The Convention was followed by meetings held in every town and village, at which, amongst other things, the abolition of landlordism was accepted as a main plank in the National programme. "No Rent," was the watchword throughout the land. Boycotting was a common process, and stories of personal outrage filled the papers. Ireland was in a state of open revolt against the authority of the law.

Speaking at Leeds on the 7th October, 1881, Mr. Gladstone uttered an ominous warning. "I have," he said, "not lost confidence in the people of Ireland. The progress they have made in many points is to me a proof that we ought to rely upon them. But they have dangers and temptations and seductions offered to them such as never were before pre-

sented to a people, and the trial of their virtue is severe. Nevertheless, they will have to go through that trial; we have endeavored to pay them the debt of justice, and of liberal justice. We have no reason to believe they do not acknowledge it. We wish they may have the courage to acknowledge it manfully and openly, and to repudiate, as they ought to repudiate, the evil counsels with which it is sought to seduce them from the path of duty and of right, as well as of public law and of public order. We are convinced that the Irish nation desires to take free and full advantage of the Land Act. But Mr. Parnell says: 'No, you must wait until I have submitted cases; until I tell you whether the court that Parliament has established can be trusted.' Trusted for what? Trusted to reduce what he says is seventeen millions a year of property, to the three millions which he graciously allows. And when he finds it is not to be trusted for that — and I hope in God it is not to be trusted for any such purpose — then he will endeavor to work his will by attempting to procure for the Irish people the repeal of the Act. But in the mean time what says he? That until he has submitted his test cases any farmer who pays his rent is a fool — a dangerous denunciation in Ireland, a dangerous thing to be denounced as a fool by a man who has made himself the head of the most violent party in Ireland, and who has offered the greatest temptations to the Irish people. That is no small matter. He desires to arrest the operation of

the Act, to stand as Aaron stood, between the living and the dead; but to stand there, not as Aaron stood, to arrest, but to spread the plague.

"These opinions are called forth by the grave state of the facts. I do not give them to you as anything more, but they are opinions sustained by reference to words and to actions. They all have regard to this great impending crisis in which we depend upon the good sense of the people, and in which we are determined that no force, and no fear of force, and no fear of ruin through force, shall, so far as we are concerned, and as it is in our power to decide the question, prevent the Irish people from having the full and free benefit of the Land Act. But if, when we have that short further experience to which I have referred, it shall then appear that there is still to be fought a final conflict in Ireland, between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness on the other; if the law, purged from defect and from any taint of injustice, is still to be repelled and refused, and the first conditions of political society are to be set at nought, then I say without hesitation the resources of civilization against its enemies are not yet exhausted. I shall recognize in full, when the facts are ripe — and their ripeness is approaching — the duty and the responsibility of the Government. I call upon all orders and degrees of men, not in these two kingdoms, but in these three, to support the Government in the discharge of its duty and in acquitting itself of that responsibility. I, for one, in that

state of facts, relying upon my fellow-countrymen in these three nations associated together, have not a doubt of the result."

Mr. Parnell replied at Wexford in a defiant speech, in which he characterized Mr. Gladstone's remarks as "unscrupulous and dishonest." The Irish people, he declared, would not rest or relax their efforts till they had regained their lost legislative independence.

Swift on these two speeches fell a heavy blow. On the 13th of October Mr. Parnell was arrested in Dublin, and carried off to Kilmainham. Mr. John Dillon, Mr. Sexton, and Mr. O'Kelly, members of Parliament, were also lodged in Kilmainham with the chief officials of the League. Mr. Egan, the Treasurer of the League, fled to Paris. Mr. Biggar and other Irish members escaped the fate of their colleagues by keeping out of Ireland.

When the House of Commons met for the Session of 1882, the Irish Leader and some of his principal lieutenants were still in Kilmainham. Coercion was in full swing. In April it was stated in the House of Commons that Mr. Forster had under lock and key not less than 600 persons, imprisoned under the Coercion Acts. Ireland, its rights and its wrongs, blazed up fiercely night after night. In the Lords a motion made by Lord Donoughmore for a Select Committee to inquire into the working of the Irish Land Act was carried, twelve Liberal Peers voting against Mr. Gladstone's policy, a matter at that time thought worthy of notice. This attempt to go back

upon legislation passed only in the previous Session roused Mr. Gladstone to mighty anger. He met the action of the Lords with a defiant resolution, debated through four stormy nights, and carried by 303 votes to 235, figures that indicate the Government were still in possession of a stout majority.

By the end of April matters had apparently reached a dead-lock. After a pause there followed what Lord Salisbury described as "prodigies appearing in the political sky." It was rumored that Lord Cowper, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, had resigned. If that were true, how did Mr. Forster stand? Evidently some portentous movement was going forward within the recesses of the Cabinet. Mr. Chamberlain was unusually active. He was to be found on the terrace of the Houses of Parliament, in the corridors, in the reading-rooms, in earnest colloquy with Irish members who through the Session had distinguished themselves by the violence of their denunciation of the Government. Here is a note made in the House of Commons on the 28th of April, written without knowledge of the crisis at the moment about to burst. It may be interesting as giving a transient view of the situation as observed by an eye-witness at the moment unaware of its true inwardness: —

"Of the two score questions on the paper this afternoon more than half were put by Irish members, and were addressed to the Chief Secretary. It is part of the organized campaign of the Land League members to worry Mr. Forster with questions.

Many relate to trivial matters; all present a great superstructure of exaggeration built upon an insignificant substratum of fact. Mr. Forster is, unfortunately, deficient in qualities that would make it possible for a Minister to meet tactics like these. The baiting of the Chief Secretary in the House of Commons by the Irish members is the nearest approach permitted by public opinion in this country to the bull fights in Madrid. There is the same agonized blundering here and there by the object of attack, the same perfect command of the situation by the Parliamentary banderillos and picadors. Sometimes Mr. Forster, reaching the limits of human patience, breaks out in righteous wrath and gores his assailants. Whereupon the Land Leaguers indignantly denounce him, and plaintively appeal to the Speaker to protect them. Oftener, as happened to-night, he affects indifference, and, like much else that he does in connection with Ireland, does it very badly. He had brought down in his despatch-box a bundle of sheets of foolscap, on each a question pasted on the top, and the conscientious answer laboriously written beneath. One by one as the questions were put he read his answers. The slightest admission of a substratum of fact was greeted with triumphant yells by the Land Leaguers; whilst any attempt to topple over the superstructure of fable or exaggeration was baffled by rude interruption. Since the Speaker did not interfere it must be taken for granted that this demonstration did not go beyond the bounds of Parliamentary decorum. It certainly exceeded all notion of fair play, not to mention the canons of commonest courtesy.

"Not the least significant feature in the incident was the solitariness that surrounded the struggling Minister. Not a cry from the Liberal Benches cheered him in his difficulty. Not one of his colleagues rose to ask the Speaker whether this constant interruption, these snarling cries, this insolent laughter, formed a breach of Parliamentary order. With his head down and his shoulders squared, Mr. Forster faced again and again the little mob below the gangway opposite, who gloated over his personal discomfort and his political discomfiture. This must be one of the hardest things for Mr. Forster to bear in his present season of tribulation. As compared with Jonah, his treatment by those who sail in the same ship with him is exceedingly hard. Jonah, up to the very moment when he was handed over the gunwale,

was courteously treated. His convenience was consulted in every way, and even when, having had put to him the question what should be done, he answered, 'Take me up and cast me forth into the sea,' his shipmates gallantly bent again to the oars, determined that, if this thing must come, it should not be till all else had failed.

"There is nothing of this in the attitude of Mr. Forster's shipmates. And yet he has been but the instrument of the policy framed in the Cabinet and adopted by overwhelming majorities by the Liberal party in the House of Commons. This open desertion of a comrade has a more disastrous effect upon the *morale* of the House of Commons than anything else that could be done. It was one of the characteristics that endeared Lord Palmerston to the nation that he stuck to a colleague, whether he was right or wrong. Whichever be the case with Mr. Forster, he has done right or wrong in company with his colleagues and his party, and when the House of Commons has presented to it a spectacle such as that witnessed between five and six o'clock to-night, it is no wonder it should develop the characteristics that just now distinguish it. What the House of Commons likes to feel is the light guidance of a strong hand, or at least the consciousness that it is being led in some particular direction to some well understood goal. At present it has not even a reliable finger-post, and amid the gathering discontent and disgust, respectability and repute retire into the background, and Mr. Callan comes to the fore."

Four days later, on the 2nd of May, Mr. Gladstone made a statement which filled the House with amazement. Earl Cowper had resigned, and so had Mr. Forster. Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. O'Kelly had been released from Kilmainham. The Government, he added, intended to bring in a measure dealing with the arrears of rent, and the Bright Clauses of the Land Act. They did not intend to renew the Coercion Act, but would forthwith bring in a Bill to strengthen the ordinary law.

This fusillade of startling announcements was made in a House crowded in every part. Something of dramatic interest was lost, owing to the fact that in the House of Lords, meeting an hour earlier, Lord Granville had forestalled the statement. But the real interest centred in the House of Commons; and the Lords, having wound up their hasty sitting, flocked over to the Commons, the Marquis of Salisbury paying one of his rare visits to the Peers' Gallery, where the Duke of Cambridge sat embedded in an accumulation of excited peerage. The Irish members received in ominous silence the announcement of the release of their comrades, whilst the Conservative Opposition, suddenly taking Mr. Forster into their favor, stridently cheered Mr. Gladstone's announcement that his resignation was based on the ground that "he declined to share our responsibility."

Mr. Forster's statement made on the following day led to fresh developments. He spoke with unusual bitterness, the Opposition boisterously cheering when from the corner seat behind the Treasury Bench, he, looking down on his old colleagues, besought them not to rest upon any secret understanding with the Land Leaguers, or to try and bribe them by concessions into obedience to the law. "Let there be no payment of blackmail to lawbreakers." Mr. Gladstone sprang up to reply. "There has," he protested, "been no arrangement, no bargain, no negotiation. Nothing has been asked, and nothing has been taken." Mr. Parnell, re-entering the House for the

first time in the Session, took the opportunity of making a statement, listened to with strained attention. The question of the release of himself and his friends had not, he declared, entered into any communication he had made of his views of the state of affairs in Ireland. What he had done was to set forth in writing his belief that a settlement of the arrears question would have an enormous effect in restoring law and order in Ireland. It would take away the last excuse for outrages, and would leave him and his friends free to take steps that might have a desirable effect in diminishing them. Mr. Dillon even more warmly protested that he had held no communication directly or indirectly with Ministers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE KILMAINHAM TREATY.

It was generally expected that Mr. Chamberlain would succeed Mr. Forster in the Chief Secretaryship. Personal relations recently established with the Irish members induced them to regard such an appointment with favor. Had Mr. Gladstone yielded on this point the political history of the next three years would have been materially different from what actually befell. Ignoring Mr. Chamberlain's aspirations and claims, the Premier nominated to the difficult post Lord Frederick Cavendish, promoted from a subordinate place in the Ministry.

On Saturday morning, the 6th of May, Lord Frederick arrived in Dublin to assume his new duties. Late that evening the Marquis of Hartington, present at a party given at the Admiralty to meet the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, was taken aside by a colleague in the Cabinet and told that his brother had been murdered. Walking to the Viceregal Lodge in company with Mr. Burke, after taking part in the State entry of the new Viceroy, Earl Spencer, Lord Frederick was fallen upon by a gang of men and stabbed in the chest. It was a fair summer evening, so light that Lord Spencer, standing at the window of the Viceregal Lodge, saw

what he afterwards knew to have been the death-struggle. Some boys on bicycles, passing down the broad highway, saw the two gentlemen walking and talking together. Returning after a spin, they found them lying side by side on the pathway, Mr. Burke stabbed to the heart, Lord Frederick with a knife through his right lung.

This outrage upon the person of an inoffensive man, who had gone over to Ireland carrying the olive-leaf of peace, created a profound sensation. Mr. Parnell took the earliest opportunity of expressing in the House of Commons, on the part of his friends and himself, and, he believed, on the part of every Irishman throughout the world, his detestation of the horrible crime committed. Some years later Mr. Gladstone incidentally mentioned that the Irish leader had privately written to him, offering, if he thought it would be useful, to retire from public life. In the temper of the House and the country there was no difficulty in hurrying through Parliament a fresh and more stringent Coercion Bill.

A fortnight after the Phœnix Park tragedy, the Irish question flamed up again around what came to be known as the Kilmainham Treaty. Partly from observations dropped by Mr. Forster, partly from other sources, the Opposition had come to the conclusion that the release of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues from Kilmainham was the price paid for assurance of changed attitude on the part of the Irish members towards the Government. Night after

night the subject was returned to, and Ministers bombarded with questions. On the 15th of May, in the course of one of these processes of interrogation, Mr. Parnell read a letter written by him on the eve of his release from Kilmainham. It set forth a certain policy which, adopted, would, in Mr. Parnell's opinion, lead to the pacification of Ireland. The concluding passage, as read by Mr. Parnell, ran thus: "The accomplishment of the programme I have sketched out to you would, in my judgment, be regarded by the country as a practical settlement of the land question, and I believe that the Government at the end of this Session would, from the state of the country, feel themselves thoroughly justified in dispensing with further coercive measures."

Mr. Forster sat in the corner seat above the gangway, which is the haven of Ministers who have cut themselves adrift from their colleagues. He listened attentively to the passages as read by Mr. Parnell. When he concluded Mr. Forster interposed, and asked whether the whole of the letter had been read? Mr. Parnell said he had read the whole of the copy as supplied to him by Captain O'Shea. Captain O'Shea, who, though at this time on terms of personal intimacy with Mr. Parnell, and later disclosed as the emissary between Mr. Chamberlain and the captive Irish Leader in the preliminaries of the Kilmainham Treaty, usually sat with the Ministerialists. He was thus within reach of Mr. Forster, who, amid a scene of growing excitement,

handed to him a document, and asked him to read the last paragraph. Captain O'Shea showed some unwillingness, and there was a bandying of the paper to and fro between the front bench below the gangway and the shaggy statesman in the corner seat. Eventually Captain O'Shea read the paper handed to him by Mr. Forster. It proved to be a copy of Mr. Parnell's letter, dated from Kilmainham 28th of April, 1882, addressed to Captain O'Shea. In it appeared a clause affirming that the settlement of the Land Question alluded to "would, I feel sure, enable us to co-operate cordially for the future with the Liberal party in forwarding Liberal principles."

By whose authority, or at whose instigation this important passage in the letter had been omitted from the copy prepared for Mr. Parnell's reading, is partly explained by Mr. Chamberlain. In the course of recurrent conversation on the subject Mr. Chamberlain said that Captain O'Shea, in privately communicating Mr. Parnell's letter to him, had asked leave to withdraw the sentence omitted from the letter read by Mr. Parnell. The incident had, he assured the scoffing Conservatives, made so little impression on his mind that when the letter was read by Mr. Parnell he had not noticed the omission was made. That the letter in its complete form came before the Cabinet, and was discussed by them with the subsequently omitted sentence forming part of the text, appears from the fact that the document handed by Mr. Forster to Captain O'Shea was the identical

one circulated among members of the Cabinet for their information. It was one of the bitter reproaches of the controversy that Mr. Forster, in handing about the scrap of paper, had betrayed the confidence of the Cabinet. However it came about, by whomsoever inspired, the omission of the sentence was a petty machination that invested the whole proceeding with an underground air of mystery distasteful to the House of Commons, and most harmful to the Ministry.

The Government had started, after the fashion of all Ministries under the leadership of Mr. Gladstone, with a comprehensive programme of work. But, as will be seen, things were already getting into a hopeless muddle in the House of Commons, and sober legislation went to the wall. The new Coercion Act and an Arrears Bill, the latter much mauled by the House of Lords, were the only important measures of a prolonged Session. On the twentieth night in Committee on the Coercion Bill twenty-five Irish members were suspended. In mid-July there came an echo of the bombardment of Alexandria in the resignation of Mr. Bright, who returned to his old place at the corner of the second bench below the gangway, the breadth of which passage separated him from his old colleague, Mr. Forster. Prorogued on the 18th of August, Parliament met again on the 24th of October, and engaged upon the New Rules of Procedure, by which it was hoped obstruction might be scotched.

CHAPTER XIX.

GATHERING CLOUDS.

THE Session of 1883 was, by comparison with its stormy predecessors, uneventful. Government approached it with large arrears of work, which they hoped to ease off by the help of the New Rules of Procedure and the establishment of Grand Committees. That three weeks were occupied with debate on the Address showed that the Closure was not such a useful instrument as had been anticipated. An attempt to pass a Parliamentary Oaths Bill aroused much angry passion, occupied considerable time, and was thrown out by a majority of three in a House of 581 members. The main results of this fourth Session of the harried Parliament was the passing of Agricultural Holdings Bills for England and Scotland, the Bankruptcy Bill, the Corrupt Practices Bill, and a Bill dealing with Patents.

In the Session of 1884 Egypt reappeared on the scene, and was made much of by an active Opposition, inspired by signs of growing weariness on the Treasury Bench. Two votes of censure were brought forward in rapid succession, the Government majority on the second dropping to twenty-eight. The great achievement of the Session, sufficient to make

it memorable, was the passing of a new Reform Bill, of which Mr. Gladstone, ever greedy for work, took personal direction. In this battle, as often happened with Mr. Gladstone, his most potent enemies were those of his own household. The Conservatives, having done enough for the extension of the franchise under Mr. Disraeli's leadership in 1867, naturally objected to further action in that direction. That was an attitude to be expected, and might be successfully dealt with. What the Ministry had most to fear was the impatience of able members in their own ranks, whose implacable principle and stern sense of duty would impel them to wreck a great and beneficent measure if on some matter of detail it was not brought into absolute agreement with their personal view.

It was to this section of his following that Mr. Gladstone turned and addressed the closing sentences of the speech in which, on the 28th of February, he introduced the Franchise Bill. "I hope," he said, "the House will look at this measure as the Liberal party in 1831 looked at the Reform Bill of that date and determined that they would waive criticism of minute details, that they would waive particular preferences and predilections, and would look at the broad scope and general effect of the measure. Do that upon this occasion. It is a Bill worth having, and if it is worth having, again I say it is a Bill worth your not endangering. Let us enter into no by-ways which would lead us off the path marked

out straight before us. Let us not wander on the hilltops of speculation. Let us not wander into the morasses and fogs of doubt. We are firm in the faith that enfranchisement is good, that the people may be trusted, that the voters under the Constitution are the strength of the Constitution. What we want in order to carry this Bill, considering, as I fully believe, that the very large majority of this country are favorable to its principles — what we want in order to carry it is union, and union only. What will endanger it is disunion, and disunion only. Let us hold firmly together, and success will crown our effort. You will, as much as any former Parliament that has conferred great legislative benefits on the nation, have your reward, and

'Read your history in a nation's eyes.'

You will have deserved it by the benefits you will have conferred. You will have made this strong nation stronger still, stronger by its closer union without; stronger within by union between class and class, and by arranging all classes and all portions of the community in one solid compact mass round the ancient throne which it has loved so well, and round a Constitution now to be more than ever powerful and more than ever free."

The progress of the Bill was delayed by votes of censure and miscellaneous discussions around Supply. When it reached the Lords, objection taken by Conservatives in the Commons to dealing with the extension of the franchise unless accompanied by a

scheme of redistribution was renewed. A hostile amendment based on this objection was carried by 205 votes against 146. An autumn Session was arranged specially to deal with redistribution. The House met on the 23rd of October, the Franchise Bill being forthwith introduced. Conciliation was in the air, and presently took the happy but unusual form of a sort of joint Committee of Leaders of parties. Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote, walking over to Downing Street, sat down with Mr. Gladstone, Lord Hartington, and Sir Charles Dilke, and in a couple of hours had come to an understanding whereby the Franchise Bill passed through the Lords. After a Christmas vacation, the House, reassembling on the 19th of February, 1885, set itself to work in committee upon a Redistribution Bill, which received the Royal Assent on the 25th of June.

Thus was a great work practically accomplished. But it was evident that the Government's mandate was exhausted and their strength failing. For the amount of labor cast upon Ministers, the Parliament of 1880–5 certainly beats the record. All-night sittings were a matter of frequent occurrence. The order of business was constantly interrupted by motions for the adjournment and pitched battles upon votes of censure. The question hour came to be an instrument of prolonged torture. The House meeting for public business at half-past four, the Orders of the Day were rarely entered upon before

six o'clock. On one occasion (in June, 1880) the House of Commons found itself at one o'clock in the morning engaged with questions, the list having been opened at half-past four in the afternoon. In the mean while Mr. O'Donnell had carried out his attack upon M. Challemel-Lacour, recently appointed French Minister at this Court.

For comparatively young men on the Treasury Bench the physical ordeal was trying. Mr. Gladstone, with his threescore years and ten upon his back, bore more than his full burden of the day's work. He was in his place early and late, his so-called "dinner hour" sometimes not exceeding thirty minutes. It was no uncommon thing to find him at his post between two and three in the morning after a turbulent night. Towards the close of the Session of 1880 he broke down. The illness, which took the form of fever with congestion of the lung, was serious enough to profoundly alarm the nation. Downing Street was crowded with anxious callers. But he pulled through, and after a trip round the coast in the *Grantully Castle*, he returned to the House, and received from both sides an ovation which for the moment stilled party acrimony. In the next Session he appeared for a while wearing a black skull-cap covering the marks of a nasty accident that befell him in stepping out of his carriage on a dark night. But nothing daunted his energy, the only signs of physical weakness and mental weariness being occasional outbursts of anger when affronted by such

persons as Mr. Warton, or threatened by some irrepressible follower below the gangway.

In May, 1885, affairs were evidently approaching a crisis. Soon after Parliament had reassembled, votes of censure on the Government were impartially moved from the regular Opposition and by a distinguished Liberal. Sir Stafford Northcote censured the Government for their policy in the Soudan. After an exciting division it appeared that the Government majority had been reduced to 14. Mr. John Morley's vote of censure protested against the employment of forces of the Crown for the overthrow of the power of the Mahdi. The Conservatives rallying with Ministers on this issue, the amendment was negatived by a rattling majority. But of the 112 who went into the lobby with Mr. Morley, the majority were habitual supporters of the Government. In addition to these troubles at home, there was the peril of the Penjdeh incident, described in an earlier chapter. A vote of credit for eleven millions had been passed. The extreme course of calling out the reserves had been approved. The air was full of electricity. At any moment the country might be engaged in a Titanic war.

CHAPTER XX.

THE STORM BURSTS.

NEARER than from the Radical camp below the gangway was heard the voice of candid friends remonstrating with the harried Premier. The Irish Coercion Bill was approaching expiry. It was understood that the question of renewing some of its clauses had been long fought in the Cabinet. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke (who, on the retirement of Mr. Bright, had entered the Cabinet as President of the Local Government Board) were understood to be resolute in their opposition to further coercion. They looked for a cure for the ills of Ireland, not in coercion, but in an extension of local government. They were Home Rulers at a time when Mr. Gladstone still held back. Mr. John Morley gave notice that when proposal was made to renew any section of the Coercion Bill he should oppose it. Mr. Morley's intimate relations at this time with Mr. Chamberlain gave the step ominous significance.

A note made on the 15th of May (1885) indicates the state of things at this moment as it appeared to an observer of the scene: —

There is more in Mr. John Morley's notice of amendment to the proposed introduction of a Crimes Bill than meets the eye. The fact is, the Government is at the present moment on the

eve of dissolution. It is not Russia nor Egypt, but Ireland. The opposition Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke have always offered to attempts to govern Ireland by coercion has not been smoothed down by the fact of their taking office. They have, I believe, steadfastly fought against the determination of the majority of the Cabinet partially to renew the Crimes Act. They were beaten; and the announcement by Mr. Gladstone of the introduction of a Bill not being followed by their immediate resignation, it was generally supposed that a compromise had been effected and the cloud blown over. This assumption was apparently confirmed by the announcement made by Mr. Gladstone on Tuesday that the Government are, after all, determined to deal this Session with the Purchase Clauses of the Land Act. That step has, however, rather had the effect of hastening the crisis than of smoothing it over. Neither Mr. Chamberlain nor Sir Charles Dilke objects to a measure dealing with land purchase. What they do object to is that it should be introduced at the present crisis. Their watchword is, "Local Government for Ireland and no Coercion." If you have coercion and no extension of local government, that is a state of things not compensated for by the introduction of a Bill dealing with the Purchase Clauses. Indeed, I believe they take the view that the introduction of such a Bill would be harmful rather than otherwise. It would be an appropriate sequel to the extension of local government. To give it priority is, in their opinion, dangerous. If Ireland is to pledge its bond for money assistance, it had evidently better be done upon the credit of local governing bodies than under the supervision of an Imperial Government harassed on many sides.

It is possible that what looks like an already broken bridge may be mended, and crisis avoided. That will depend upon the squeezability of the Whig portion of the Cabinet. The Radical section have resolutely made up their minds that the fullest extent to which they can conscientiously go to meet the views of Earl Spencer is that the Crimes Act, if renewed, shall run for one year only. This would leave the matter to be dealt with by the new Parliament, evidently a desirable thing. Failing concession on this point, Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, with whatever profound regret at taking a step that must be embarrassing to Mr. Gladstone, will resign their places

in the Government. They will be followed out of the Cabinet, certainly by Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, and possibly by one or two others. It is difficult to see how, with such powerful forces below the gangway, a reconstructed Government will be able to carry the Crimes Bill.

This state of affairs, as may well be supposed, weighs heavily upon Mr. Gladstone, who is still struggling to effect an honorable settlement with Russia.

Here is another peep at the House of Commons on the eve of catastrophe, the approach to which it will be perceived was vaguely, but surely felt. The note, made in the House of Commons, is dated Friday night, 5th of June: —

It was pitiful to note to-night the manner in which, when public business commenced, all eyes were turned towards the Treasury Bench. The Cabinet Council which it was (quite erroneously) thought would settle the Ministerial crisis had been held. Mr. Gladstone was in his place, looking pale and worried with a paper in his hand, upon which he now and then turned a troubled glance. He does not bring down manuscript to the Treasury Bench unless it contains notes for some portentous announcement. What this might be members could only guess, and all guessed the same thing. Sir William Harcourt sat next to the Premier, even his massive head bent under the pressure of a Ministerial crisis. Beyond was Lord Hartington, an interesting convalescent who every one was glad to see had recovered his robust health. Presently Mr. Childers came in. But that was all. Sir Charles Dilke, usually most punctual in his attendance, was absent, and so was Mr. Chamberlain. What had happened was clear to the meanest comprehension. The crisis had burst; Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke had resigned, and the sheet of note-paper with which Mr. Gladstone nervously toyed contained the terms in which he would, in due course, announce the fact to the House.

Five minutes later Sir Charles Dilke bustled in and took a seat near the Home Secretary. Evidently there was somewhere a flaw in the course of conjecture, which was finally shattered by the ap-

pearance of Mr. Chamberlain with a white orchid — symbol of peace — in his buttonhole. The Ministry were for the moment safe. But the crisis was postponed, not averted — a turn of affairs which rather deepened the feeling of discontent and depression. If anything was to happen, in Heaven's name let it happen at once and make an end of this indefinite dragging on through the slough of uncertainty.

Mr. Gladstone, rising at eleven o'clock to-night in a moderately filled House, delivered a remarkable and interesting speech. Looking at him as he stood at the table with a certain ashen-gray tinge on his face, and a distinct lassitude in his manner, it might well be thought that here was a man weary to death of incessant labor, gasping for the holiday near at hand. This view was strengthened by the tone in which he spoke. The magnificent voice for fifty years familiar in the House of Commons, which not many years ago resounded over Blackheath, and which sounded like a clarion through Midlothian, is broken. I believe that during his last visit to Midlothian he overstrained it, and though the failure was at the time regarded as temporary, there appears now no doubt of its permanency. But though the Premier seemed almost in the last stage of physical exhaustion, and his voice was husky, and sometimes did not rise above a whisper, there was no sign of failing power in the skill and force with which he met the battery arrayed against him, for some hours blazing away at every point of Ministerial policy. The sentences were as perfect in their construction as ever, the play of fancy as free, and the sarcasm as keen as in his best days.

That was the last time this Parliament of the Queen adjourned with Mr. Gladstone in the position of Leader. On the following Monday the House resumed debate on the second reading of the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, embodying Mr. Childers' Budget proposals. Sir Michael Hicks Beach submitted an amendment condemning the increase of the beer and spirit duties, and the failure to give relief to local taxation. The appearance of the House dur-

ing the greater part of the sitting did not indicate approach to a memorable event. Sir Michael Beach, Mr. Childers, and Sir Stafford Northcote, upon whom the burden of debate at this time chiefly fell, were not able to overcome the depression that had fallen upon the assembly.

It was ten minutes to one in the morning of the 9th of June when Mr. Gladstone rose to continue the debate. He was in fine form, and in the excitement of the hour had overcome the huskiness of voice that still beset him. It was half-past one when he resumed his seat, and the division was forthwith called. As members streamed out to vote, few, if any, forecasted the result. The Government, often threatened, would come out with a reduced majority, but sufficient to avert defeat. Mr. Gladstone, having made an end of speaking, sat for a moment with flushed face and folded arms, evidently thinking with hot resentment of "the regular Opposition," "the loyal Opposition," "the national Opposition," "the patriotic Opposition," "the constitutional Opposition," he had a moment earlier, with ringing voice and sweeping gestures, denounced. Then he suddenly bethought him of his duty to the Queen, which involved the writing of a letter summarizing the proceedings of the night. Picking up paper and writing-pad he made his way as quickly as possible through the throng into the lobby. The division would occupy nearly a quarter of an hour, and as time was precious he would improve the opportunity

while it presented itself. When he came back he opened the writing-pad on his knee and went on with the letter, undisturbed by the stream of members constantly passing him on the way to their places.

At a quarter to two this morning (writes the eye-witness already quoted from) the inflow of members began to fall off. They had at first rushed in like the sea. They now trickled back like a brook in June. As the final moment arrived the excitement grew in intensity. Lord Randolph Churchill was back, sitting on the extreme edge of the seat, straining his eyes, first towards one door, then to the other, looking for the teller who should be first in. Sir Henry Wolff bustled in and out, bringing the latest report of the figures. The buzz of conversation rose higher and higher; and still, as at another crisis Madame Defarge went on knitting, Mr. Gladstone went on writing, "presenting his humble duty to the Queen," informing her how matters thus far had fared.

Presently Lord Kensington, who had been "telling" the Ministerialists, made his way with difficulty through the crowd at the bar. Lord Richard Grosvenor, who was "telling" with the Opposition, had not yet arrived. Here was a portentous incident, the significance of which could not be misunderstood. If the Ministerialists were through the lobby first, they must be the smaller number. But it was remembered that the Liberals, even when in a considerable majority, are often the first through the lobby. No one dared either be sure or sad.

Sir Henry Wolff, who had made another excursion to the gates of the Opposition lobby, returned with radiant face, calling out the numbers as he passed the Front Opposition Bench, and carrying the glad tidings to his excited Leader. Then Lord Randolph gave vent to his feelings in a shout of delight. It was taken up from members near him, and was echoed in the Irish camp behind. In another minute all the tellers were in, and it was seen that Lord Richard Grosvenor, instead of moving to the right, the place of the victor in the line of Whips, was edging to the left.

Lord Randolph Churchill leapt on to the bench, and, waving

his hat madly above his head, uproariously cheered. Mr. Healy followed his example, and presently all the Irish members, and nearly all the Conservatives below the gangway, were standing on the benches waving hats and pocket-handkerchiefs, clamorously cheering. This was renewed when the figures were read out by Mr. Winn, and again when they were proclaimed from the Chair. From the Irish camp rose cries of "Buckshot! Buckshot!" "Coercion!" These had no relevancy to the Budget scheme; but they showed that the Irish members have not forgotten Mr. Forster, and that this was their hour of victory rather than the day of the triumph of the Tories.

When the figures were announced, showing the Government in a minority of twelve, Lord Randolph Churchill threatened to go mad with joy. He wrung the hand of the impassive Rowland Winn, who regarded him with a kindly curious smile, as if he were some wild animal. Mr. Gladstone had resumed his letter and went on calmly writing, whilst the Clerk at the table proceeded to run through the Orders of the Day as if nothing particular had happened. But the House was in no mood for business. Cries for the adjournment filled the House. Mr. Gladstone, still holding his letter in one hand and the pen in the other, quietly moved the adjournment, and the crowd surged through the doorway, the Conservatives still tumultuously cheering.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STOP-GAP GOVERNMENT.

At the sitting of the House next day, Mr. Gladstone, using the phrase consecrate to the occasion, stated that, as a consequence of the decision arrived at by the House early in the morning, the Cabinet had thought fit to "submit a dutiful communication to Her Majesty." It would, he added, with the gravity of which on such occasions he is a master, be premature to disclose the nature of that communication. There was, indeed, no necessity for the confidence. Every one knew that the Ministry had resigned, and every one expected that Lord Salisbury would be sent for. These forecasts were realized. At first there was a hitch, Lord Salisbury accepting only conditionally the duty imposed upon him by the Queen. He frankly declared that before entering upon office it was indispensable, in view of the relative position of parties in the House of Commons, that the Conservative leaders should receive from Mr. Gladstone a pledge to support them in measures absolutely necessary to bring the Session to a close.

The two points specified by Lord Salisbury in the correspondence that followed were the undisputed right of the Government to take precedence for their

business whenever Supply or the Appropriation Bill was put down. Secondly, he claimed authority to issue Exchequer Bonds for the requirements of the Estimates if no other provision was made. His communication was addressed to the Queen, and by her sent on to Mr. Gladstone, with request for prompt reply. The delicate negotiation was prolonged and embarrassed by the circumstance that the grave Ministerial crisis was not permitted to interrupt the Queen's holiday, which, enjoyed at Balmoral, necessitated much journeying to and fro, not only of Queen's messengers, but of Ministers-elect. Mr. Gladstone finally answered that he had consulted his colleagues on the matter, and they were agreed it would be contrary to their public duty to compromise their liberty by giving the specific pledges Lord Salisbury demanded. At the same time he assured the Queen that "in the conduct of the necessary business of the country during the remainder of the Session, there would be no disposition to embarrass the Government serving your Majesty."

With this assurance Lord Salisbury had to be content, and forthwith set about constructing his Ministry. Lord Randolph Churchill, who, as we have seen, had done more than any other member of the Opposition to oust Mr. Gladstone, came to the front. What he had irreverently termed "the old gang" did not love him. The section of the party which, without invidious distinction, may be described as being elderly and respectable, shook their heads and protested that

they would not follow the young man, — a feeling of repulsion in which they certainly had the sympathy of Lord Salisbury. But the Young Man won all along the line. As Mr. Chamberlain put it in a contemporary speech, "Goliath hath succumbed to David, and Lord Randolph Churchill has his foot on Lord Salisbury's neck." Sir Stafford Northcote, a man whose great Parliamentary capacity was obscured by a retiring disposition, was shelved in the recesses of the House of Lords. He was named Earl of Iddesleigh, and endowed with the high-sounding but harmless office of First Lord of the Treasury. As a compromise, Lord Randolph had to accept Sir Richard Cross at the Home Office, Mr. W. H. Smith as Secretary of State for War, and Lord George Hamilton as First Lord of the Admiralty. He himself became Secretary of State for India, providing for Mr. Gorst with the Solicitor-Generalship and its attendant knighthood, and Mr. Arthur Balfour as President of the Local Government Board, whilst Sir Henry Wolff was assured of entrance upon a diplomatic career that finally landed him Her Majesty's Minister at Madrid. Sir Michael Hicks Beach undertook the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, with the Leadership of the House.

A most significant appointment was that of Lord Carnarvon to the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland. It was reported when the office was accepted that Lord Carnarvon had specifically stipulated that an attempt should be made to rule Ireland without coercion.

This rumor was confirmed at the earliest possible moment, when, on the reassembling of Parliament after the re-election of the new Ministers, the Lord Lieutenant informed the House of Lords that it was not intended to reintroduce the Crimes Act for Ireland.

It was recognized on both sides that the whole duty of the new Government was to wind up the business of the Session, dissolve Parliament, and appeal to the country.

Speaking at the Cobden Club dinner on the Saturday immediately following the defeat of the Government, Mr. Chamberlain described the situation with an incisiveness and lucidity that never vary with change of political attitude: "Lord Salisbury and the Tory party," he said, "must lie on the bed they have made for themselves. They cannot evade their responsibilities. No doubt their situation is a very difficult one; but they should have thought of that before. No doubt they find themselves now face to face with many inconvenient declarations. There are statements which we have been taught to describe as 'commercial illustrations' which will now have to be explained away. There are pledges which have been given, and the party, as a whole, are committed, if words mean anything, to an entire reversal of almost the whole of the policy of the last few years. But, gentlemen, we are not alarmed. Those pledges were not made to be kept. They have served their purpose, and I look forward with interest to the spectacle,

which I believe will shortly be presented, of a great party with indecent expedition hastening to divest itself of a whole wardrobe of pledges and professions which it has accumulated during the past few years, stripping off every rag of consistency, and standing up naked and not ashamed, in order that it may squeeze itself into office. That is the position, gentlemen. It is only upon these terms that what will be known in history as the Stop-gap Government can invite the toleration of its opponents. They must not undo our work. They must not jeopardize the results already accomplished. They must continue on the main lines of the policy they have so often and so vehemently condemned. But if they are willing to do that, for my part I see no reason why they should not remain as caretakers on the premises until the new tenants are ready, in November, for a prolonged, and, I hope, permanent, occupation."

It fell to the lot of Sir Michael Beach to provide a Budget in lieu of the one upon which the late Ministry had been overthrown. This task he accomplished in a charmingly simple manner. By the vote of the 8th of June the House of Commons had decided against the proposal of Mr. Childers to increase the beer and spirit duties. The existing arrangement under this head would accordingly be left undisturbed. But the whole of the other proposals of the Budget on which the late Government had been dethroned would be adopted by their successors. The non-increase of the beer and spirit duties would leave a deficit of four

millions, which he proposed to meet by the elementary device of issuing exchequer bills.

On the 14th of August Parliament was prorogued, and on the 18th of November it was dissolved.

The interval was a busy one for politicians. Mr. Chamberlain came prominently to the front, delivering a series of stirring speeches at Holloway, Hackney, Hull, Warrington, Glasgow, Bradford, and other great centres of population. Knowing nothing of the brink on which he stood, unsuspecting the astounding transformation scene silently preparing, he at this epoch out-rouged all Radicals. He propounded what was known as "the unauthorized programme," travelling along Radical lines far beyond the point of junction at which Mr. Gladstone, impelled by pressure from below the gangway, had yet been able to fix it. None were more alarmed than a section of his former colleagues. "The Salvation Army in Politics," Mr. Goschen described the enthusiastic band that followed the member for Birmingham. Mr. Chamberlain, for his part, was not less bitter in denunciation of Moderate Liberals than he was of Conservatives. With eye plainly fixed on Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen, he, speaking at Warrington on the 8th of September, uttered the warning that "if the Moderate Liberals joined the Tories they would be going out of the frying-pan into the fire" — a curious reflection from so high authority to come upon in the last decade of the century. "It is perfectly futile and ridiculous," he in this same speech protested, "for

any political Rip Van Winkle to come down from the mountain on which he has been slumbering and tell us that these things [enumerated in the Unauthorized Draft] are to be excluded from the Liberal Programme. The world has moved on while these dreamers have been sleeping, and it would be absurd to ignore the growth of public opinion and the change in the situation the Reform Acts have produced."

On the 9th of November Mr. Gladstone left Hawarden on his new Midlothian Campaign, his journey northward being, as before, a triumphal progress. At all the large towns multitudes thronged round the carriage and were addressed in vehement, vigorous speeches.

The Parnellites, having made it possible for the Conservatives to turn Mr. Gladstone out of office, loyally maintained the alliance at the general election. They were not without hope that they would obtain from a Tory Government that Home Rule on which their hearts were set and which Mr. Gladstone had hitherto refused. Lord Carnarvon had made haste to announce that the Coercion Bill would not be renewed. Later, on the eve of the general election, Mr. Parnell had referred to the position of Austria and Hungary as suggesting a possible basis of settlement of the Irish difficulty. Speaking at Newport on October 7th, Lord Salisbury jumped at this suggestion. He was bound to say that he had never seen any plan or suggestion that would at present give him the slightest ground for anticipating that in that direction would be found satis-

factory solution of the Irish problem. "But," he added, "I wish that it may be so."

These things were on the surface. Much else was going on by subterranean passages, sufficient at all events to induce the Irish party to enlist their unrivalled electoral skill and activity in the service of Tory candidates wherever they stood. The poll, under the Reform Act, completed just before the change of Ministry, was taken upon a register which for the first time included the whole body of the householders and lodgers of the United Kingdom. The lowering of the franchise in the boroughs, bringing on to the Register large batches of Irish voters, was an immense assistance to the Constitutional party. Nevertheless, when the figures were finally adjusted it was found that the House of Commons was to the extent of exactly one half composed of Liberals, who numbered 335 against 249 Tories and 86 Parnellites. The counties had readjusted the balance of the boroughs, the newly enfranchised rustic voter supporting the hands that had emancipated him.

Everything now plainly turned upon the attitude of the Irish members. They were masters of the situation and their price was well known. That Lord Salisbury and his colleagues were considering whether it was worth what it would bring appeared from the fact that, contrary to custom established in 1868 and observed in 1874 and 1880, Ministers, having suffered at the polls a heavy defeat on strictly party lines, did not forthwith resign. Parliament need not meet just

yet, and in the mean time a great deal might happen. One thing that happened was a meeting between Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Parnell, brought about at the invitation of the Conservative Lord Lieutenant, at which a Home Rule scheme was frankly discussed with friendliest attitude on the part of Lord Salisbury's colleague. When, some months later, the secret of this conference oozed out, it was affirmed on behalf of Lord Salisbury and his colleagues in the Cabinet that in this matter Lord Carnarvon had acted entirely on his own initiative, without authority from the Cabinet, an unusual proceeding on the part of a cautious and experienced statesman, and a very dangerous precedent to create.

The first Session of the new Parliament opened on the 12th of January (1886), the Queen lending to the desperate Ministry the rare support of her presence at the opening ceremony. The Speech from the Throne confirmed the impression which had overmastered earlier suspicion, that Lord Salisbury's Government had finally abandoned all idea of maintaining alliance with the Parnellites on the peremptory terms of their bringing in a Home Rule Bill. The benevolent attitude displayed by Lord Salisbury at Newport was changed, the Speech containing ominous announcement that "if the existing provisions of the Law prove inadequate to cope with the growing evils of organized intimidation, Parliament will be asked to grant further powers to the executive."

This settled the matter. The support of the Irish members withdrawn, the Government was doomed, and there remained only the question of the precise spot on which they should fall. The Government manœuvred to go out upon a division on the Irish Question, when they would have the advantage of dying gloriously in defence of the Union. Fate was against them, they being driven out of office upon an unromantic side issue. Amongst the amendments to the Address was one moved by Mr. Jesse Collings, regretting that the Queen's Speech contained no promise of legislation in the matter of small allotments for agricultural laborers. This amendment was carried by 329 votes to 250, and the Stop-gap Government, having achieved its mission, disappeared from the scene.

CHAPTER XXII.

HOME RULE.

In a letter written by Mr. Gladstone to his friend Bishop Wilberforce, dated 1865, there occurs this remarkable passage: "There have been two great deaths, or transmigrations of spirit, in my political existence, — one very slow, the breaking of ties with my original party; the other, very short and sharp, the breaking of the tie with Oxford. There will probably be a third and no more." It is not possible that at this period Mr. Gladstone had in his mind the great disruption of 1886. Yet that event precisely fulfils the forecast.

It has been made a charge against Mr. Gladstone that through political exigencies and from lust of power he made a sudden turn-about-face on the Home Rule Question. That is a charge from which Lord Hartington at an early stage of the bitter controversy generously relieved him. Speaking at the Eighty Club dinner on the 5th of March, 1886, Lord Hartington said: "I think no one who has read or heard during a long series of years the declarations of Mr. Gladstone on the question of self-government in Ireland can be surprised at the tone of his present declaration. Lord Randolph Churchill, himself an

attentive student of Mr. Gladstone's speeches, can find no later date than 1871 in which Mr. Gladstone has spoken strongly against the demands of the Irish people for greater self-government. Well, when I look back to those declarations Mr. Gladstone made in his place in Parliament, which have not been infrequent, when I look to the increased definiteness given to those declarations in his address to the electors of Midlothian and in his Midlothian speeches, when I look to the announcements which, however unauthorized and inaccurate, have never been asserted to be, and could not have been, mere figments of the imagination, but expressed more or less accurately not the conclusions which Mr. Gladstone had formed, but the ideas he was considering in his own mind, — I say, when I consider all these things, I feel that I have not, and that no one else has, any right whatever to complain of the tone of the declarations which Mr. Gladstone has recently made on this subject."

This passage accurately deals with dates and occasions. Speaking at Manchester in the same year, Mr. Gladstone precisely described his position antecedent to the date of his third Administration. "Since 1871," he said, "when Home Rule came up above the surface, and long before it was at the front, I never once on any occasion have in principle condemned it. I have required to know its meaning. I have required to see that it was asked and sought for by the bulk of the Irish nation. But

never in its principle has it been condemned by me."

Turning over the mighty volumes of his recorded speeches, Mr. Gladstone remembered six upon which, since the Home Rule Question became one of practical politics, he had adverted to it. Three were delivered on public platforms — at Aberdeen in 1872, in Midlothian 1879–80, and in Guildhall 1881. More important were three made in the House of Commons. The first in 1872 when, as Prime Minister, he was called upon to reply to Mr. Butt's resolution affirming Home Rule principles; the second in 1874, when he spoke as Leader of the Opposition; the third in 1880, "when," as he with curious punctiliousness puts it, "I sat on these (the Opposition benches) as an independent member." The present writer happened to hear the speech delivered in the House of Commons in 1872. After a lapse of more than twenty years there remains the impression left on the mind of the hearer of the unusual tone of the Prime Minister's declarations. At that time Mr. Butt was leader of a numerically small, personally an insignificant, party. Home Rule was a new cry, and was met with sometimes angry, always contemptuous protest, from politicians, whether Liberal or Conservative. Mr. Gladstone, by his speech, gave importance to what was otherwise a flat, uninteresting debate. Differing from other speakers outside the little Irish camp, he did not utter a *non-possumus*. What he did was to invite Mr. Butt to define Home

Rule, formulate a scheme, submit it to the House and the country, and thereupon opinion might be formed.

In February, 1882, Mr. P. J. Smith moved an amendment to the Address, declaring that "the only efficacious remedy for the deplorable condition of Ireland is a readjustment of the political relations established between Great Britain and Ireland by the Act of Union." Mr. Gladstone then made a speech which was an, perhaps unconscious, echo of his reply to Mr. Butt ten years earlier. The process of education in Home Rule principles having in the interval progressed, he indeed went a step further, expressing himself favorable to the introduction of Local Government in Ireland, "rightly understood," he was careful to add. But he insisted that the preliminary step thereto could not be taken "until the Irish members had produced a plan and set forth the machinery by which they meant to decide between Imperial and local questions, and so to give satisfaction to members of the House of Commons upon the first and most paramount duty — namely, to maintain the supremacy of the Imperial authority for every practical purpose relating to the interests of this great Empire."

In this same debate on the Address, speaking on the 16th of February, 1882, Mr. Gladstone made a declaration on the Home Rule Question, which he reasonably relies upon to acquit him of the charge of becoming with suspicious suddenness a convert to

Home Rule. "I believe," he said, "that when the demand is made from Ireland for bringing purely Irish affairs more especially or more largely under Irish control outside the walls of Parliament, the wise way to meet that demand is not the method adopted by the senior member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket), who, if I understood him aright, said that anything recognizing purely Irish control over purely Irish affairs must necessarily be a step towards separation, and must, therefore, necessarily be fraught with danger. That I do not believe to be the wise or the just method of dealing with the subject.

"In my opinion the wise and just method of dealing with it is this — to require that before any such plan can be dealt with, or can be examined with a view to being dealt with on its merits, we must ask those who propose it — and this is a question I have universally put — What are the provisions which you propose to make for the Supremacy of Parliament? That has been my course, and that is the course in which I intend to persevere. I am bound to say that I have not yet received an answer. I never heard in the mouth of Mr. Butt, or from the mouth of any other gentleman, any adequate or satisfactory explanation upon that subject. And to this declaration of my opinions I have only one more limitation to add, and it is that I am not prepared to give to Ireland anything which in point of principle it would be wrong to give to Scotland, if Scotland requires it;

and that is a condition, that is a limitation, which I am sure Irish members of the most popular class will be ready to accept."

The answer to Mr. Gladstone's inquiry as to the desirability, even the necessity, of granting Home Rule to Ireland was supplied by the issue of the general election of December, 1885. Out of 103 Irish members, 85 were returned pledged to support Home Rule. This was an overwhelming majority, but it was exceeded in proportion by the respective character of the two sections. Nineteen of the Home Rulers had been returned without a contest, — admission of the impregnability of their position. Of the 49 who went to the poll each received an average of 4,329 votes against an average of 454 polled for each Conservative returned.

There was no mistaking the direction in which the wind of public opinion blew. Mr. Gladstone, as a Constitutional statesman, accepted the mandate. His first hope was that the Government of Lord Salisbury would follow up the lines of the Newport speech and the amiable efforts of Lord Carnarvon, by attempting to grapple with the question. As he pointed out in his address to the electors of Midlothian, issued in February, 1886, "Weak as the Conservative Government was for ordinary purposes, it had great advantages in dealing with the Irish crisis. A comprehensive measure proceeding from them would have received warm and extensive support from within the Liberal party. It would

probably have closed the Irish Controversy within the Session of 1886, and have left the Parliament of 1885 free to prosecute the stagnant work of ordinary legislation, with the multitude of questions that it included. My earnest hope was to support the Cabinet in such a course of policy."

Happening to meet Mr. Arthur Balfour, a fellow-guest at Eaton Hall, Mr. Gladstone took the opportunity of expressing the hope that Lord Salisbury's Government, which still hung on to office, would take a strong and early decision on the Irish Question. "If," he said, "you bring in a proposal for settling the whole question of the future Government of Ireland my desire would be, reserving of course necessary freedom, to treat it in the same spirit in which I have endeavored to proceed in respect to Afghanistan and the Balkan Peninsula."

This overture was declined, and Mr. Gladstone discovered that if the aspirations of Ireland were to be satisfied he must take the field in person. Already there were disquieting rumors of a new departure. In mid-December, a newspaper paragraph appeared purporting to give an outline of the Home Rule scheme sanctioned by the Liberal chief. This Mr. Gladstone discreetly contradicted. "The scheme" (which Mr. John Morley described as "the guess of some enterprising newspaper gentleman") "is not," Mr. Gladstone averred, "an accurate representation of my views, but, as I presume, a speculation upon them. It is not published with my knowledge

or authority, nor is any other beyond my own public declarations."

A month later Mr. Gladstone had formed his Ministry on the resignation of Lord Salisbury. It became necessary, when inviting colleagues to join him, that the Premier should precisely state his views on the Home Rule Question. This statement, it soon appeared, was not satisfactory to Lord Hartington nor to Sir Henry James. The latter sacrificed opportunity of succeeding to the splendid position of Lord Chancellor rather than join in Mr. Gladstone's new crusade. It is interesting to recall the fact that neither Lord Hartington nor Sir Henry James at this time contemplated permanent severance from the Liberal party. Lord Hartington spoke of the great regret with which he found himself "for a time separated from, or at any rate not in complete harmony with, those with whom I have for so many years found my chief pride and pleasure in acting." "I am not going to take up my abode in a cave," Sir Henry James told his constituents. "The climate of a cave would not suit me." With these two exceptions, and the temporary withdrawal of Sir Charles Dilke from political life, the new Ministry was formed principally of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues in his former Administration.

Contemplating the labor attendant on an attempt to pilot a Home Rule Bill through the House, Mr. Gladstone did not again take up the Office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, with which some of the

most brilliant episodes of his career were connected. Sir William Harcourt, whom some prophets expected to see on the Woolsack, became Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Farrer Herschell becoming Lord Chancellor with the title Lord Herschell. Lord Rosebery was Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville caring for the Colonies. Mr. Chamberlain was President of the Local Government Board, Mr. John Morley Chief Secretary, Lord Aberdeen undertaking the duties of Lord Lieutenant. Mr. Trevelyan was Secretary for Scotland, Mr. Heneage Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Mr. Jesse Collings Under-Secretary of the Local Government Board. The brief Ministerial career of Mr. Collings was checkered by two circumstances — one a squabble about his salary, the other his being unseated for acts of bribery committed by his agent at the Ipswich election.

On the 3rd of February Mr. Gladstone completed his new Cabinet. Before a month had sped it was evident that all was not well within its recesses. At a Conference of the London and Counties Liberal Union held on the 2nd of March, reference was made to the calm that appeared to prevail in political circles. "I am not sure," said Mr. John Morley, gravely shaking his head, "that it is not the calm of the glassy waters on the edge of the bend of the Niagara." The 22nd of March was the date originally fixed for the introduction of Ministerial measures dealing with Ireland, one treating the Land

Question, the other Local Government. As the day approached it was postponed for a fortnight. Before that extension of time was exhausted Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan had resigned, being followed by Lord Morley and Mr. Heneage. It was made known later that Mr. Chamberlain's main objection to Mr. Gladstone's programme centred, not on the Home Rule Bill, but on the Land Bill. Addressing his constituents in Birmingham on the 21st April, Mr. Chamberlain said he "was afraid his opposition to the Land Purchase Bill could not be met." His still impregnable Radicalism was indicated by the fact that he objected to the measure "because it pledged the future capital and earnings of the country in order to gratify Irish landlords." His opposition to the Home Rule Bill was, he added, conditional, and would be withdrawn if the representation of Irish members at Westminster were maintained.

Mr. Gladstone patched up his Ministry and went forward with the task he had taken in hand. On the 8th April, in a densely crowded and profoundly excited House, he explained the clauses of his Home Rule Bill. For three hours and a half he spoke, with unfailing vigor and with a lucidity that made clear to the listening throng all the intricacies of his scheme. The main proposal was that a body seated in Dublin should have control of the Executive Government in Ireland and of its legislative business. The Parliament was to consist of two representative chambers, an Upper and a Lower House. The latter

would be built upon the nucleus of the 103 members then sitting at Westminster as representatives of Ireland. Those present during the delivery of the speech will not forget that no proposal of the Bill was received with such hearty and general cheering. Before a week had passed it was selected as the clause upon which the fullest measure of opposition should be concentrated. Five days later the Irish Land Purchase Bill was introduced with the effect of further alienating friends and strengthening foes. Early in the morning of the 9th of June the House divided on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, which, amid a scene of wild excitement, was rejected by a majority of thirty in a House of 652 members.

The Cabinet decided on an immediate dissolution and the reference of the issue to the constituencies. It was a big undertaking, for, as things had now got mixed, it would be necessary for Mr. Gladstone to gain in Great Britain not less than 108 seats in order to retain office. He had to fight not only against the regular Conservative Opposition, but against a section of the old Liberal party, respectable in its numbers, influential in its membership. Mr. Bright, once the foremost champion of Irish Nationality, had long been drifting into line with the Tory landlords. The author of the famous phrase "Force is no remedy," was now on the side of the Coercionists. This change had been commented upon by the Irish members in terms whose violent animosity naturally

aggravated a man who had many claims upon their gratitude and respect. Mr. Bright threw himself into the election contest on the side of the Tories with much of the vigor with which he had in earlier days fought the battle of the people in the Corn Law Controversy, and in the field of Parliamentary reform. In a speech delivered on the eve of the election, he declared that "the legislation proposed by Mr. Gladstone is only another step forward in the march through rapine to the break-up of the United Kingdom."

Mr. Chamberlain brought to bear on the campaign his unrivalled experience in the strategy of electioneering gained when Birmingham was winning for itself the position of the stronghold of Liberalism. Lord Hartington carried his personal and territorial influence into opposition against his former chief. The united, and much invigorated, body of Conservatives joined hands with a mixed contingent of Whigs and Radicals. The combination was irresistible, and when the sum total of the election was reached, Mr. Gladstone found himself in a minority of 113. The new Parliament consisted (in addition to the Speaker) of 318 Conservatives, 73 quondam Liberals, an allied force of 391, mustered against 278 Home Rulers, of whom 85 were under the personal leadership of Mr. Parnell.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN OPPOSITION.

THIS blow, falling unexpectedly upon a man in his seventy-seventh year, was by ordinary computation sufficient to finally quench desire for struggle or hope of victory. With Mr. Gladstone it served simply as the incentive to further action. He had been beaten down to the ground before. In 1874 he himself thought his race was run. Yet a little while and he returned to the course, his colors, after strenuous struggle, again flashing in the front. As compared with his position after the general election of 1874, his plight in the summer of 1886 was infinitely more hopeless. At the earlier epoch the Liberal party, though defeated and disheartened, was, to such extent as is possible with it, united. Now it was split in twain, and the rivalry of the old political parties was loving-kindness compared with the bitter hatred of severed brethren. Mr. Bright's attitude towards his colleague and friend of forty years was typical of the chasms riven in the party. Not only had his old captains turned upon him, carrying with them files of private soldiers, but, in even larger proportion, defections arose in the Liberal press. Of London morning papers only one, *The Daily News*, at this crisis under new editorial management,

remained faithful to the Liberal chief and the main body of the Liberal party. In the country important papers like *The Scotsman* in Edinburgh and *The Daily Post* in Birmingham, having through many years done conspicuous service to the Liberal cause, now joined the enemy.

In "An Artist's Reminiscences," Mr. Rudolf Lehmann quotes a personal tribute paid by the late Sir Andrew Clark to his illustrious patient, which sharply indicates Mr. Gladstone's position at this time. "Here is a man," he said, "who at the very end of a long life, honorably spent in the service of his country, in possession of everything a mortal can possibly desire, risks fame, position, the love, nay, the esteem of his country and his Sovereign — everything in fact worth living for — in order to carry out what he is profoundly convinced to be right. And how that man is vilified! But, mark my word, no man will be more regretted and more extolled when he is gone."

At one time there seemed some possibility of the wound being sewed up and the Liberal party coming together once more. Mr. Chamberlain was, at first, a little restive finding himself yoked with a political party he had spent the earlier years of his life in combating. On the eve of Christmas, 1886, Lord Randolph Churchill, who in the formation of Lord Salisbury's Government had been made Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons, abruptly resigned. There was a time in the

Parliament of 1880–85 when Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill were almost literally at daggers drawn. Their long personal duel reached a climax when Lord Randolph, in a succession of stormy scenes, indicted Mr. Chamberlain for alleged responsibility for the Aston Riots. Acting together in common opposition to Mr. Gladstone and all his works, the two had become as closely allied as they were formerly bitterly estranged. Lord Randolph's retirement from the Ministry filled Mr. Chamberlain with alarm. "The old Tory influence had gained the upper hand in the Government," he told his constituents, "and we may find ourselves face to face with a Tory Government whose proposals no consistent Liberal would be able to support." What were the Liberals going to do? "It seems to me," Mr. Chamberlain said, "they have a great, perhaps a final opportunity. We Liberals are agreed on ninety-nine points of our programme. We disagree only on one. Are we far apart upon the principles which ought to guide a settlement of that one — the Land Question? I think not. I am convinced that sitting round a table, coming together in a spirit of compromise and conciliation, almost any three men, Leaders of the Liberal party, although they may hold opposite views upon another branch of the question, would yet be able to arrange some scheme."

This led to the famous Round Table Conference. It consisted of Sir William Harcourt, at whose house the meetings were held, and who still preserves the

table (which, by the way, is not round, but elliptical in shape), Mr. John Morley, Lord Herschell, Mr. Chamberlain, and Sir George Trevelyan. The proceedings were watched with keen interest. Upon the result everything turned. The Liberal party once reunited, the Salisbury Ministry on Sufferance would go the way of the Stop-gap Government. At a moment when agreement seemed within reach of outstretched hand there appeared in *The Baptist* an article from the pen of Mr. Chamberlain, in which he bitterly attacked Mr. Gladstone. This fell on the astonished world like a bolt out of the blue. Mr. Gladstone at once recognized the uselessness of further negotiations for peace, and at his instance Sir William Harcourt wrote suggesting that further meetings of the Conference should be suspended. It never met again, and day by day the bitterness of parted friends grew blacker. Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain still insisted that they, at this, their best of times, 73 strong, were the true Liberals, the 193 Home Rulers, returned by British constituencies, being the Seceders. They called themselves Liberal Unionists. But the style Dissentient Liberals, which *The Daily News* attached to the little party, was more widely accepted.

Promptly on the conclusion of the general election, Mr. Gladstone resigned office, and Lord Salisbury, after vain overtures for official coalition with Lord Hartington, reigned in his stead. Once more the veteran gladiator uttered a note of fatigue. On the

4th August, 1886, he wrote to Mr. Arnold Morley, Chief Whip under his late Government: "Even apart from the action of permanent causes the strain of the last six years upon me has been great, and I must look for an opportunity of some change and repose, whether in or beyond this country." He did not appear during the brief Session in which Lord Randolph Churchill led the House of Commons, spending some autumn months in Italy. But he was back in the following Session, taking his place as Leader of the Opposition, fulfilling its duties with unsparing assiduity. He took a prominent part in the debates connected with the appointment of the Parnell Commission, and surpassed himself in the vigor and eloquence of his speeches whenever the Irish Question came up.

Such an occasion befell on a memorable night in the Session of 1889. Mr. John Morley had moved an amendment to the Address, challenging the Irish policy of the Government. Through four not very lively nights the talk had meandered. On Monday, the 1st of March, the House filled up in anticipation of a speech from Mr. Gladstone. The town was thrilling with the news which that morning had burst on the Courts of Justice where the Parnell Commission sat. Pigott, the person on whom *The Times* had mainly built up its charges against Mr. Parnell, had for some days of the previous week suffered scathing cross-examination by Sir Charles Russell. On Monday morning he was to have re-

turned to his place of torture. When his name was called no answer was forthcoming, and soon it was known that the perjured witness had fled.

This collapse of a case from which so much was hoped — had indeed been accomplished — to the detriment of Home Rule visibly depressed the Ministerialists. The elation in the Liberal ranks was typified by Mr. Gladstone's manner as he stood at the table. Mr. Morley's amendment was an invitation to the Government to abandon their coercive policy and attempt the pacification of Ireland by boldly and generously dealing with the agrarian question. "You may," said Mr. Gladstone, in a concluding passage delivered with thrilling energy, "deprive of its grace and of its freedom the act you are asked to do, but avert that act you cannot. To prevent its consummation is utterly beyond your power. It seems to approach at an accelerated rate. Coming slowly or coming quickly, surely it is coming. And you yourselves, many of you, must in your own breasts be aware that already you see in the handwriting on the wall the signs of coming doom."

Mr. Parnell had not been present during this speech. He came in after dinner, entering so quietly that few noticed him. Mr. Asquith, then an almost unknown Scotch member, had just concluded one of those speeches which rapidly laid the sure foundations of high ministerial position. When the crowded House became aware of Mr. Parnell on his

feet in an obscure quarter below the gangway, the Irish members uprose, stormily cheering. Some English members above the gangway followed their example. Mr. Gladstone, looking round and recognizing Mr. Parnell, rose to welcome the return of a man who had, through strangely moving circumstances, emerged from dire peril. His action was imitated by all his colleagues on the Front Bench, only Lord Hartington, who in company with Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Henry James through this Parliament insisted on seating themselves in line with Mr. Gladstone in testimony that they were still Liberals, though they habitually voted with the Tories — only Lord Hartington at the gangway-end of the Front Opposition Bench sat stolidly staring before him.

It was a memorable scene, of which doubtless in later years Mr. Parnell, sitting lonely below the gangway, must sometimes have thought.

After the collapse of the Parnell Commission, Mr. Gladstone's hope and faith, which had never faltered, began to inspire the great body of his followers in the House of Commons and throughout the country. A majority of 113 appears a stone wall against which a Leader of the Opposition may beat in vain. Already it had begun to crumble. Not only did the bye-elections send recruits to the Home Rule army, but members like Sir George Trevelyan, Mr. Caine, and others who had seceded in 1886 began to straggle back to the colors. The rising tide that seemed to

be carrying the Home Rule party into the haven where it would be was suddenly and calamitously checked by an influence least expected to work in this direction. An action for divorce brought by Captain O'Shea, with Mr. Parnell as co-respondent, resulted in the pronouncement of a decree *nisi*. It was naturally expected that Mr. Parnell would resign the Leadership of the Irish party, and, temporarily at least, withdraw from political life. Mr. Parnell hesitating, Mr. Gladstone declared his position in the following letter addressed to Mr. John Morley:—

1, CARLTON GARDENS, Nov. 24, 1890.

MY DEAR MORLEY, — Having arrived at a certain conclusion with regard to the continuance at the present moment of Mr. Parnell's leadership of the Irish party, I have seen Mr. McCarthy on my arrival in town, and have inquired from him whether I was likely to receive from Mr. Parnell himself any communication on the subject. Mr. McCarthy replied that he was unable to give me any communication on the subject. I mentioned to him that in 1882, after the terrible murder in the Phœnix Park, Mr. Parnell, although totally removed from any idea of responsibility, had spontaneously written to me and offered to take the Chiltern Hundreds, an offer much to his honor, but one which I thought it my duty to decline.

While clinging to the hope of a communication from Mr. Parnell to whomsoever addressed, I thought it necessary, viewing the arrangements for the commencement of the Session to-morrow, to acquaint Mr. McCarthy of the conclusion at which, after using all the means of observation and reflection in my power, I had myself arrived. It was that, notwithstanding the splendid services rendered by Mr. Parnell to his country, his continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland. I think I may be warranted in asking you so far to explain the conclusion I have given above as to add that the continuance which I speak of would not only place many hearty and effective

friends of the Irish cause in a position of great embarrassment, but would render my retention of the leadership of the Liberal Party, based as it has been mainly upon the prosecution of the Irish cause, almost a nullity.

This explanation of my own view I begged Mr. McCarthy to regard as confidential, and not intended for his colleagues generally, if he found that Mr. Parnell contemplated spontaneous action. But I also begged that he would make known to the Irish party at their meeting to-morrow afternoon that such was my conclusion if he should find that Mr. Parnell had not in contemplation any step of the nature indicated.

I now write to you in case Mr. McCarthy should be unable to communicate with Mr. Parnell, as I understand you may possibly have an opening to-morrow through another channel. Should you have such an opening I would beg you to make known to Mr. Parnell the conclusion itself, which I have stated in the earlier part of this letter. I have thought it best to put it in terms simple and direct, much as I should have desired had it been within my power to alleviate the painful nature of the situation. As respects the manner of conveying what my public duty has made it an obligation to say, I rely entirely on your good feeling, tact, and judgment.

Mr. Parnell declined to budge. There followed the historic scenes in Committee Room No. 15, where the once autocratic Irish chief stood at bay against the majority of his own followers. There were persistent rumors that Mr. Gladstone, tired out and finally disgusted with the man for whom he had sacrificed so much, had resolved to quit the scene. The story found credence only in proportion as it reached the outer edge of the circle that surrounded him. Those standing nearer, privileged to watch him work and hear him talk, smiled at the notion. He himself took no notice of the persistent rumors, till one Wednesday he indirectly answered in

conclusive fashion. On that day he made a speech in the House of Commons which is conceded by friend and foe to rank on a level with his greatest efforts. The subject was of a kind that always inspires his oratory. It was involved in a Bill proposing to remove the bar which fends off Roman Catholics from the Woolsack and from the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland. It is almost the last vestige of religious intolerance left on the statute-book, and Mr. Gladstone hoped to remove it before his strength was spent. As he rose the House was crowded, a rare thing on a Wednesday afternoon, when the Speaker takes the chair at mid-day. He spoke for an hour and ten minutes, with an ease, a fulness of voice, a dignity of tone, and a strength of argument that charmed the House, if it did not convince the majority. It was a speech that, had it been the single effort of a lifetime, would have established a Parliamentary reputation. Coming incidentally in the course of the Session, a sort of recreation on an off-day in a strenuous campaign, it was a marvellous achievement for an octogenarian, and for a while dissipated any lingering idea that Mr. Gladstone, weary of the long fight, weighted under his load of years, was sighing for rest.

But even with its doughtiest champion undismayed, it seemed that at last Home Rule had received its death-blow. It never had roused sentiment in England, Scotland, and Wales as, for example, did the Reform Bill, or Mr. Plimsoll's

crusade against overloaded ships. It was Mr. Gladstone's marvellous personality, his indomitable energy, his persuasive eloquence, that had slowly worked on the public mind, bringing it into a condition in which it was resolved, at whatever cost, to do justice to a sister nation. Such a mood did not seem equal to the strain placed upon it by the squabbles that now arose among the Irish members, by the uproar in Committee Room No. 15, by the assaults led by Mr. Parnell in person on *The Freeman's Journal* Office in Dublin, by the recrimination in the newspapers, and by the abuse on the platforms. The sincerest friends of Home Rule were growing tired of it. Only Mr. Gladstone stood steadfast, pressing forward with unfaltering step towards a goal that seemed ever receding.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PREMIER ONCE MORE.

MR. GLADSTONE tells a story of a lady whom he met within a year of the general election of 1886. "She is, he says, an old and esteemed friend of mine, a very kind friend, but has the misfortune of being a strong Tory. We were talking over a recent speech of Lord Salisbury at the Carlton Club. This lady was very much annoyed that Lord Salisbury should have exhibited great fear of a dissolution. I said, 'Well, it is very unreasonable indeed that he of all people in the world should dread a dissolution. Does not everybody know — presuming to speak of myself as a symbol of the party — is it not an established fact, that at the general election twelve months ago I was extinguished?' She said to me with considerable readiness, 'Yes, but you are popping up again.'"

On the 28th of June (1892) the Salisbury Parliament was dissolved, and as a result of the general election that followed, Mr. Gladstone "popped up again." In view of the magnitude of the task that lay before him, the elevation reached was, however, not encouragingly high. The Conservatives returned 269 members, the Dissenting Liberals 46, a combination of 315 against a total of Ministerialists of

355, of whom 274 ranked as Liberals, and 81 as Home Rulers. This majority of 40 was not so wide as Mr. Gladstone had secured in 1880, nor so deep as that which had kept Lord Salisbury in power for six years. But it would serve, or would serve supposing there were anything like cohesion in its component parts. A glance round the new House of Commons when it first gathered sufficed to dispel pleasing illusion. During the general election, what were safe Liberal seats were in several instances wantonly given away by division in the Liberal ranks. These divisions were marked in the House by the return of a little group, of whom Mr. Keir Hardie was the most prominent figure, calling themselves the Independent Labor Party. Even worse was the chasm riven in the ranks of the Irish Nationalist members. Under the leadership of Mr. J. Redmond, there was a section who devoted themselves to carrying out what they believed to be the policy of Mr. Parnell. They were only nine all told; but with a majority of two-score, a compact body of nine, masters of themselves though Governments fall, is a matter of serious consideration. In addition to their ever threatened, sometimes accomplished, defection, was the damage accruing to the Home Rule cause from the evidence of lack of unity amongst those who professed to be its exponents and advocates.

The majority was at no distant time to fall away; but in the first pitched battle it mustered to a man. The new Parliament met on August 5th to

find Conservative Ministers still on the Treasury Bench. Issue was forthwith joined, the motion for the Address being met by a vote of no confidence, moved by Mr. Asquith, and seconded by Mr. Burt, an arrangement which accurately forecasted the inclusion of these two members in the new Government. After three days' debate the House divided, the vote of no confidence being carried by 350 against 310. The formal business of the Session being hastily wound up, Parliament was prorogued, to meet again on the 1st day of February for the despatch of business.

No time was lost in bringing in the Home Rule Bill, which stood first in the programme announced from the Treasury Bench when the new Session opened under Mr. Gladstone's Premiership. On Monday, the 14th of February, 1893, Mr. Gladstone rose in a densely crowded House to ask leave to introduce what through the long fight he always punctiliously styled "a Bill for the better government of Ireland." For him, if he had been inclined to take a personal view of the situation, the moment was one of supreme triumph. Out of the lowest, in some eyes the hopeless, depths of Opposition he had toiled upwards, till now he rose from the seat of the Prime Minister, a Home Rule Bill once more in his hands. The accessories of the scene were worthy of the occasion. Once more the introduction of chairs on the floor of the House was sanctioned in order to supplement the ordinary accommodation. It did not

come to much as far as heads were counted. But some two-score members, wedged in on the floor of the House, gave the last touch of animation to the crowded scene. From the Peers' Gallery the Prince of Wales looked down and listened. On his left hand sat the Duke of York. The Peers fought for their places like pittites at the door of a theatre on an attractive "first night." Lord Rosebery and Earl Spencer strategically avoided the crush by securing seats in the Diplomatic Gallery, otherwise crowded by Foreign Ministers and Attachés. When Mr. Gladstone stood at the table, Liberal and Irish members with one accord leaped to their feet, the ranks below the gangway shutting out from view the double row of Dissentient Liberals, who stubbornly kept their seats. The first sentences spoken by the Premier showed he was in full possession of his still splendid voice. According to habitude he had brought with him the famous pomatum-pot, which he placed on the table by the side of his notes. But only twice in a speech that exceeded two hours in the delivery did he have recourse to its refreshment.

It was characteristic of his mental subtlety that he showed himself at the outset anxious to make it clear that the Bill of 1886, which had resulted in his defeat and long consignment to opposition, was not abandoned by its author. Five principles underlay that measure. To those principles the new Bill would be found closely to adhere, though, he added parenthetically, "there are certain important changes

in detail." What these were, and as including the retention of the Irish members they were certainly not unimportant, was made clear in the luminous exposition to which the House listened with rapt attention. Subject to the reservation of certain matters for the consideration of the Imperial Parliament the Bill as brought in constituted an Irish Legislature authorized to make laws for Ireland in matters exclusively relating to Ireland. The matters reserved for the Imperial Parliament related to the Crown, the Viceroyalty, the declaration of war and the making of peace, national defence, foreign treaties, dignities, titles, coining, and everything belonging to external trade. With a view to relieving Viceroyalty of party character, the Bill provided that the office should be held for six years, not as hitherto dependent upon the coming and going of Ministers. An Executive Committee of the Privy Council in Ireland would serve the Viceroy as a Cabinet, advising him whether to give or withhold his assent to Bills passed by the Irish Parliament, the veto of the Sovereign remaining in full force. The Irish Parliament would consist of two Chambers, a Legislative Council and a Legislative Body. The former, elected by constituencies composed of persons of twenty pound rating, would consist of forty-eight members, who would sit for eight years. The Legislative Body, consisting of 103 members, would be elected by the existing Parliamentary constituencies for a period of five years. The constabulary would

be gradually replaced by a body appointed under the direction of the new Legislature, remaining during the period of transition under the direction of the Viceroy. Irish members were to be retained at Westminster in the reduced number of 80, that being their precise proportional representation, and in only practical exercise of the rights of voting. They were, for example, precluded from taking part in divisions on any Bill or motion "exclusively affecting Great Britain or things or persons therein." Nor were they to vote any money otherwise than for Imperial purposes. As to financial arrangements, the Bill proposed that the Customs Duties should be appropriated as Ireland's contribution to Imperial finance, leaving to the Dublin Parliament revenues arising from the excise, local taxes, Post Office and Crown Lands. With the exception of the constabulary, to the cost of which the Imperial Exchequer would contribute one third, Ireland would be required to meet the whole of the charges under its new legislation.

Folding up and laying aside the notes on which his explanation of the details of the Bill was based, Mr. Gladstone, in a noble peroration, the music of which was long sustained, pointed to the future. If this controversy were to end, the sooner they stamped and sealed the deed that was to efface all former animosities the better. For his part, he never would, and never could, be a party to bequeathing to his country a continuance of the heritage of discord,

handed down through seven centuries from generation to generation with hardly a momentary interruption. "Sir," he said, in a voice struggling with emotion, "it would be a misery to me if I had omitted in these closing years any measures possible for me to take towards upholding and promoting what I believe to be the cause, not of one party nor of another, not of one nation nor another, but of all parties and all nations inhabiting these islands." "Let me entreat you," he added in last words, spoken in clear though low voice, "if it were with my latest breath I would entreat you to let the dead bury its dead. Cast behind you every recollection of bygone evils, cherish, love, and sustain one another through all the vicissitudes of human affairs in the times that are to come."

The first reading was not challenged to the point of a division. After four nights' debate Mr. Gladstone, sitting up till one o'clock in the morning for the studiously delayed opportunity, brought in the Bill amid a fresh demonstration of enthusiasm on the Ministerial benches. Twelve nights were occupied in occasionally animated debate on the second reading, which was carried by 347 votes against 304, figures that show how, perhaps inspired rather by the energy of a great statesman and orator than by uncontrollable enthusiasm for the measure, the Ministerial majority stood together. Forty-eight sittings were appropriated to Committee of the Bill. For the most part they were very dull, flashing up on the

last night in a scene of happily unparalleled disorder, a free fight taking place on the floor of the House. After fourteen nights on the report stage, which offered opportunity of saying over again with the Speaker in the Chair what had been repeated *ad nauseam* in Committee, the closure was invoked and the Bill ordered for third reading. Three more nights sufficed for this final stage. The Bill was sent up to the Lords, who after four nights' debate threw it out, on September 8, by 419 votes against 41.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BOW UNBENT.

THE Session had now entered upon its eighth month. Day and night through its restless, sometimes turbulent, progress Mr. Gladstone had been at his post bearing in person the brunt of the battle that raged round the Home Rule Bill. When, on the 21st of September, the House adjourned, it seemed an occasion peculiarly fitted for prolonged recess. But in spite of exceptional hard labor, the Session had been almost barren. Resolved that the year should have some legislative record, the Premier arranged for an autumn sitting. The House accordingly met again on the 2nd of November, and with brief intermission for Christmas Day, sat up to the 5th of March, 1894. The time was chiefly occupied with consideration of the English Local Government Bill and the Employers' Liability Bill. The former the Lords seriously hampered with amendments. The latter they so completely crushed that the Government declined the responsibility of adopting the cripple, and it was laid aside. From first to last this, Mr. Gladstone's last active Parliamentary Session, included 226 sittings, ninety more than the average of the previous fifteen years. The work of a hundred days, bestowed

upon the Home Rule Bill, the Employers' Liability and the Scotch Sea Fisheries Bills, was nullified by the action of the House of Lords.

Mr. Gladstone snatched a brief holiday at Biarritz. Whilst he was yet away the persistent stream of rumor asserting his intended resignation crystallized in a definite statement published in an evening newspaper. The positiveness of the assurance created profound sensation, not absolutely set at rest by the guarded terms in which Mr. Gladstone, personally appealed to, seemed to contradict the statement. He came back to find the House of Commons engaged in conflict with the House of Lords on the Employers' Liability Bill. They had introduced an amendment making it possible for railway servants to contract themselves out of the operation of the Act. Mr. Gladstone, declining to accept the Bill thus mutilated, moved its discharge. Another tussle arose over the Parish Councils Bill. It was in explaining the reasons why the Government, shrinking from completing the wreck of the Session, would carry forward the Bill with the Lords' amendments, that he, on the 1st of March, made his last speech at the table of the House of Commons in the capacity of Prime Minister.

Whilst the House was crowded to its fullest capacity, it did not surely know what was happening. The air was full of rumors, but the immediate effect of the speech was to discredit the supposition that resignation was imminent. That it had been

decided upon and must take place at an early date was accepted as inevitable. There was, indeed, one passage forming the closing words of this memorable speech that, read by the light of subsequent events, plainly indicated Mr. Gladstone's position — that of a knight who had laid down his well-worn sword, hung up his dinted armor, content thereafter to look on the lists where others strove. The House of Lords, in accentuation of an attitude long assumed, had, he said, within the last twelve months shown itself ready, not to modify, but to annihilate the work of the House of Commons. "In our judgment," Mr. Gladstone said slowly and emphatically, "this state of things cannot continue." After a pause, necessitated by the vociferous cheering of the Liberals, he added, "For me, my duty terminates with calling the attention of the House to the fact, which it is really impossible to set aside, that in considering these amendments, limited as their scope may seem to some to be, we are considering a part — an essential and inseparable part — of a question enormously large, a question that has become profoundly acute, a question that will demand a settlement, and must at an early date receive that settlement from the highest authority."

This limitation of active personal share in the crusade against the Lords certainly sounded like an announcement of the end. But looking on the upright figure standing by the brass-bound box, watching the mobile countenance, the free gestures, noting

the ardor with which the flag was waved leading to a new battle-field, it was impossible to associate thought of resignation with the Premier's mood.

The situation of the hour was one of difficulty not unfamiliar to the Leader of the Liberal party, and was approached and over-mastered with a skill peculiar to Mr. Gladstone. Faced by serried ranks of opponents, he was hampered on the flank by malcontents within his own camp. As usual at political crises, there was a body of statesmen below the gangway who knew much better how to set the battle in array than did the veteran commander. They thirsted for the blood of the hereditary legislator. They would be satisfied with nothing less than Lord Salisbury's head brought in on a charger by the Sergeant-at-Arms. When, on the threshold of his speech, Mr. Gladstone plainly declared that the conflict between the two Houses had continued long enough they vociferously cheered. When he proceeded to explain the plan of campaign involving a temporary suspension of hostilities, they relapsed into sullen silence. When the speech was over they, thirty-seven strong, went out into the lobby to vote against their chief, who, in the last division he took part in as Leader of the House of Commons, found himself walking shoulder to shoulder with the men who had defeated his cherished Home Rule scheme, and who now fell in line to support him against the revolt of a section of his followers.

This episode was the only thing that marred a his-

toric scene. The audience was worthy of the occasion. Closely packed from the benches on the floor to the topmost range of the Strangers' Gallery, it sat watchful and intently listening. Of the members who have taken prominent part in recent stirring Parliamentary history only Mr. Chamberlain was absent. Had he been there he might have spent an interval of proud, if pained, reflection on the unfulfilled. Had he not, for conscience' sake, separated himself from the bulk of the Liberal party in the cataclysm of 1886, there would have been no occasion for the controversy that presently raged as to who should be Mr. Gladstone's successor. Mr. Arthur Balfour, a young elegant hardly known to the House, and not at all to the country when Mr. Gladstone began his Ministry of 1880, now sat opposite to him, Leader of the Opposition, with an established reputation, whose daily growth had been watched by none with keener pleasure or more generous satisfaction than by the veteran against whose shield he had tilted. On Mr. Balfour's right hand sat Lord Randolph Churchill, who within the same space of fourteen years had found time laboriously to build and abruptly to wreck a unique position. In the gallery over the clock sat the statesman who nearly twenty years ago succeeded Mr. Gladstone when "at the age of sixty-five and after forty-two years of laborious public life," he first thought himself entitled to retire. At arm's-length of the Duke of Devonshire, with head resting on his hands, sat Lord Rosebery,

looking on at a scene the secret of whose full import he shared with the few who knew how peculiarly close was his personal interest in it. Between them, bolt upright, sat Lord Spencer, to whom the turn affairs had taken must have been strangest of all. Had the event which now culminated happened ten years ago there is no doubt it would have been upon Lord Spencer, not Lord Rosebery, that all eyes would have been fixed as the successor of Mr. Gladstone. His high character, his long services to the Liberal party, crowned by his personal devotion, priceless in Ireland in the troublous times between 1882–85, marked him out for the office. But events move rapidly in politics, and some men insensibly move aside. It came to pass, on the day when Mr. Gladstone finally quitted the scene, Lord Spencer's name was not even mentioned in the running for the succession.

It is a noteworthy coincidence, one of the few points of similarity in the careers of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli, that having made their last speech in Ministerial capacity they walked away without taking formal farewell, leaving the House unconscious that it had been assisting at an historical scene. It did not know, on an August night passed away seventeen years earlier, when Mr. Disraeli stood by the table and joined in debate, that it would be the last time he might ever speak from the familiar place. He knew it of course, and it was possibly not by accident that the final word spoken by him in

the ear of the House of Commons was "Empire." The speech attracted little attention from a by no means crowded House. The Session was old, members were weary, and debates on foreign affairs had come to be something of a bore. The Premier spoke after dinner, and, resuming his seat, sat for a while silent with folded arms and head bent down. When the question in discussion of which he had joined was disposed of, midnight struck, and the business of the sitting was approaching completion. He rose and shook himself together with the action which in those last years he found a necessary preparation for stately march under observant eyes. Had he followed his ordinary habit and walked out behind the Speaker's chair, one would not have noticed, even been aware of, his departure. On this particular night he walked the full length of the floor, turning as he passed the Mace to make obeisance to the Speaker. He halted again on reaching the Bar, and stood there for a moment silently regarding the House less than half filled and wholly unconscious of this silent farewell. Then he crossed the Bar, never more to return to the scene of his one historic failure and his many brilliant successes.

Mr. Gladstone, on finally quitting the Treasury Bench, did not even so far depart from his ordinary custom. He sat listening to Mr. Balfour's vigorous speech, in which the Opposition Leader announced amid a fresh burst of cheering from the delighted Liberals that "behind the dignified language of the

speech there lurked nothing less than a declaration of war against the ancient Constitution of these realms." After the division he sat for a while with his Ministerial box on his knee, chatting brightly to his colleagues, some of whom were sharers in his secret. Then he rose and walked out with springy steps, by his usual pathway behind the Speaker's chair.

To men familiar for twenty years or more with the House of Commons it seemed impossible that it could be itself when this majestic figure was withdrawn. For those of sentimental mood the pity of it is that presently, almost immediately, things began to go forward much as they did when Mr. Gladstone sat in the seat of Leader. No man, not even Mr. Gladstone, is indispensable. When Mr. Disraeli vanished from the scene it was felt that an irretrievable blow had been dealt at its attractiveness and personal interest. But the Speaker took the chair as heretofore. The Clerk proceeded to read the orders of the day. The Fourth Party leaped into existence to make things lively, and members straying over to the House of Lords on occasional field nights marvelled to discover how dull Lord Beaconsfield had become.

Happily, though the dignified presence be withdrawn, and may never more be seen on the Treasury Bench, the figure which was the cynosure of every eye there will ever remain with the House of Commons the precious possession of memory. Men, in

this respect undivided by political opinion, momentarily free from party asperity, will be thankful that though they never saw Pitt in the flesh, never heard Canning's voice, they have sat through successive Parliaments with Mr. Gladstone.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN THE HOUSE AND OUT.

More than half a century ago there was published a little book entitled the "British Senate in 1838." It is full of those personal descriptions of eminent men in their public capacity which, written in our own time, we very properly reprobate, but for which historians and biographers, writing many years after, are exceedingly grateful. The anonymous writer has preserved for posterity a picture of the young man eloquent which is rare and interesting.

"Mr. Gladstone's appearance and manners," he says, "are much in his favor. He is a fine-looking man. He is about the usual height, and of good figure. His countenance is mild and pleasant, and has a highly intellectual expression. His eyes are clear and quick; his eyebrows are dark and rather prominent. There is not a dandy in the House but envies what Truefitt would call his 'fine head of jet-black hair.' It is always carefully parted from the crown downward to his brow, where it is tastefully shaded; his features are small and regular, and his complexion must be a very unworthy witness if he does not possess an abundant stock of health. Mr. Gladstone's gesture is varied but not violent. When he rises he generally puts both his hands behind his

back, and having there suffered them to embrace each other for a short time, he unclasps them, and allows them to drop on either side. They are not permitted to remain long in the locality before you see them again closed together, and hanging down before him. Their reunion is not suffered to last for any length of time. Again a separation takes place, and now the right hand is seen moving up and down before him. Having thus exercised it a little, he thrusts it into the pocket of his coat, and then orders the left hand to follow its example. Having granted them a momentary repose there, they are again put into motion, and in a few seconds they are seen reposing *vis-à-vis* on his breast. He moves his face and body from one direction to another, not forgetting to bestow a liberal share of attention on his own party. He is always listened to with much attention by the House, and appears to be highly respected by men of all parties. He is a man of good business habits; of this he furnished abundant proof when Under-Secretary for the Colonies, during the short-lived Administration of Sir Robert Peel."

It is curious to note that some of these mannerisms of nearly sixty years ago are preserved by the great statesman the House of Commons knew in the last decade of the nineteenth century. It was particularly notable that up to the last, when Mr. Gladstone rose and began what was intended to be a great oration, he had a tendency to clasp his hands behind his back. This attitude, like the subdued mood of

which it is an indication, prevailed only during the opening sentences. Age fired rather than dulled his oratorical energy. When in Opposition during the Parliament of 1874–80 he increased in rapidity of gesture almost to the point of fury. The jet-black hair had faded and fallen, leaving only a few thin wisps of gray carefully disposed over the grandly formed head, with which, as he once told a Scotch deputation, London hatters have had such trouble. The rounded cheeks were sunken, their bloom giving place to pallor. The full brow was wrinkled. The dark eyes, bright and flashing still, were underset with innumerable wrinkles. The "good figure" was somewhat rounded at the shoulders; and the sprightly step was growing deliberate. But the intellectual fire of early manhood was quickened rather than quenched, and the promise of health had been abundantly fulfilled in a maintenance of physical strength and activity that came to be phenomenal. Up to his eightieth year Mr. Gladstone would outsit the youngest member of the House if the issue at stake claimed his vote in the pending division. He could speak for three hours at a stretch, putting in in that time as much mental and physical energy as, judiciously distributed, would have sufficed for the whole debate.

By comparison he was far more emphatic in gesture when addressing the House of Commons than when standing before a public meeting. This, doubtless, was explicable by the fact that, while in the

one case he was free from contradiction, in the other he was, more particularly during periods of Tory ascendency, outrageously subject to it. Trembling through every nerve with intensity of conviction and the wrath of battle, he almost literally smote his opponent hip and thigh. Taking the brass-bound box upon the table as representative of "the right honorable gentleman" or "the noble lord" opposite, he beat it violently with his right hand, creating a resounding noise that sometimes made it difficult to catch the words he desired to emphasize. Or, standing with heels closely pressed together, and feet spread out fan-wise, so that he might turn as on a pivot to watch the effect of his speech on either side of the House, he would assume that the palm of his left hand was his adversary of the moment, and straightway violently beat upon it with his right hand. At this stage was noted the most marked retention of early House of Commons habit, in the way in which the orator continually turned round to address his own followers, to the outraging of a fundamental point of etiquette which requires that all speech shall be directed to the Chair.

There is a passage in Mr. Lecky's "History of England in the Eighteenth Century" which reads like a page taken out of a study of Mr. Gladstone, to be written by the historian who shall write the "History of England in the Nineteenth Century."

Pitt had (Mr. Lecky writes) every requisite of a great debater: perfect self-possession; an unbroken flow of sonorous and dignified

language; great quickness and cogency of reasoning, and especially of reply; an admirable gift of lucid and methodical statement; an extraordinary skill in arranging the course and symmetry of an unpremeditated speech; a memory singularly strong and singularly accurate. No one knew better how to turn and retort arguments, to seize in a moment on a weak point or an unguarded phrase, to evade issues which it was not convenient to press too closely, to conceal, if necessary, his sentiments and his intentions under a cloud of vague, brilliant, and imposing verbiage.

With one exception this is a minute, accurate, and striking description of Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons. The exception will be found in the first requisite cited in the summing up of the character of a great debater. Once on his feet in the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone's self-possession left little to be desired. But when, in times of great pressure, badgered by inconsiderable persons on the opposite benches, the great orator, the statesman who towered head and shoulders above any who sat around him or before him, sometimes fell into a condition of mind and body that excited the mocking laughter of his opponents, the sorrow and regret of his friends.

This weakness, the more notable by reason of its contrast with the imperturbability of Mr. Disraeli, made the parliamentary fortune of many men of varying ability. When Sir William Harcourt and Sir Henry James sat together below the gangway in the Parliament of 1868, they, as we have seen, shrewdly recognized the pathway to promotion. In the same way, though not in similar degree, Mr. Ashmead Bartlett and Mr. Warton profited by Mr.

Gladstone's inability to control himself when, seated on either of the front benches, he followed the course of acrimonious debate. Mr. Stanley Leighton, who at one time seemed in the running, lost his prize only because he had not staying power. Mr. Warton, a vulgar, boorish partisan, early discovered that he could "draw" Mr. Gladstone at pleasure, disturbing him at his work just as the braying of an ass which had strayed in the courtyard of the quiet house in the suburbs of Athens might have fatally broken in on the meditation of Plato. To call "Oh! oh!" and "Ah! ah!" when the veteran statesman, borne down through the day with imperial cares, was occupying an hour of the evening in strenuous debate, did not require much mental activity or seem to demand prodigious recompense. Yet it led Mr. Warton into a comfortable salaried office at the Antipodes. Mr. Ashmead Bartlett did better still, a minor place in the Ministry, crowned by a knighthood, rewarding his patriotic endeavors. Working in the same way, though on a higher level, Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Henry Wolff, and Sir John Gorst first brought themselves into notice.

Except at its very best, Mr. Gladstone's parliamentary manner lacked repose. He was always brimming over with energy which had much better have been reserved for worthier objects than those that sometimes succeeded in evoking its lavish expenditure. I once followed Mr. Gladstone through the hours of an eventful sitting and jotted down notes of

his manifold gyrations. It should be premised that the date was towards the conclusion of his second Administration, when once more, as in 1873, things were going wrong. The foe opposite was increasing in the persistence of its attack, and nominal friends on the benches near him were growing weary in their allegiance and lukewarm in their attachment. The Premier came in from behind the Speaker's chair with hurried pace. He had been detained in Downing Street up to the last moment by important despatches on a critical matter then engrossing public attention. As usual when contemplating making a great speech, he had a flower in his buttonhole, and was dressed with unusual care. Striding swiftly past his colleagues on the Treasury Bench, he dropped into the seat kept vacant for him, and hastily taking up a copy of the Orders, ascertained what particular question in the long list had been reached. Then turning with a sudden bound of his whole body to the right, he entered into animated conversation with a colleague, his pale face working with excitement, his eyes glistening, and his right hand vehemently beating the open palm of his left as if he were literally pulverizing an adversary. Tossing himself back with equally rapid gesture, he lay passive, for the space of eighty seconds. Then, with another swift movement of the body, he turned to the colleague on the left, dashed his hand into his side pocket as if he had suddenly become conscious of a live coal secreted there, pulled out a letter,

opened it with violent flick of extended forefingers, and earnestly discoursed thereon.

Rising presently to answer a question addressed to him as First Lord of the Treasury, he instantly changed his whole bearing. His full rich voice was attuned to conversational tone. The intense, eager restlessness of manner had disappeared. He spoke with exceeding deliberation, and with no other gesture than a slight outward waving of the right hand, and a courteous bending of the body in recognition of his interlocutor. The mere change of position, the contact of his feet with the solid earth, seemed, as was usually the case, to have steadied him and re-endowed him with full self-possession. Often in angry debates one has seen him bounding about on the Front Bench apparently in uncontrollable rage, loudly ejaculating contradiction, violently shaking his head, and tendering other evidence of lost temper, hailed with hilarious laughter and cheers from gentlemen opposite. Finally springing to his feet with a fierce bound, he has stood at the table motionless and rigid, whilst the House rang with the tumult of cheers and the bray of hostile clamor. When the Speaker authorized his interruption it seemed as if the devil of unrest were thereby literally cast out. He suddenly became himself again, and in quiet voice set forth in admirably chosen language a weighty objection.

On the night to which these notes refer the debate was resumed by Lord Randolph Churchill, who, then

seated below the gangway, irresponsible and irrepressible, had enjoyed an hour of perfect pleasure. With eye watchfully fixed on the mobile figure stretched out in the seat of the Leader of the House, he pricked and goaded him as the sprightly matador in the arena girds at the infuriate bull which, if it were only intelligently to expend its force, could tear the human mite into unrecognizable shreds. At first the Premier assumed an attitude of ordinary attention, with legs crossed, hands folded so that they caressed either elbow. He threw back his head so as to rest it on the back of the bench, and closed his eyes, the light from the roof falling on a perfectly placid countenance. As Lord Randolph went on with quip and crank, audacious accusation and reckless misrepresentation of fact or argument, he uplifted his head, shuffled his feet, crossed and recrossed his hands, and fixed an angry eye on the delighted tormentor. The potion was beginning to work, and jeering cries from Conservatives above the gangway or howls from the Irish camp, at the gates of which Lord Randolph's standard was at that time planted, added to its efficacy.

Soon Mr. Gladstone began to shake his head with increased violence as Lord Randolph repeated a statement thus contradicted. Louder grew the irritating cheers from the Opposition. The triumphant whisper went round, "Randolph 's drawing him!" Excited by the tumult, and vainly trying to lift his still mighty voice above the uproar, Mr. Gladstone,

seating himself perilously near the edge of the seat, bending forward and grasping himself somewhere below the knee, leant across towards the more-than-ever-delighted adversary, angrily reiterating "No, no, no!" A pitiful and undignified demonstration on the part of the Prime Minister, which was exactly what Lord Randolph Churchill was endeavoring to bring about, his success hailed with increasing cheers by the pleased Opposition.

When Lord Randolph had made an end of speaking Mr. Gladstone sprang up with catapultic celerity. For a moment he held on to the box at arm's-length, drawing himself up to fullest height with a genial smile on his countenance that completed the contrast with his late perturbed manner. Once more he was himself, his supremacy over the House, lost through the lamentable exhibitions but just witnessed, immediately reassumed with his self-command. Now was witnessed exhibition of that skill which Mr. Lecky noted in Pitt. Like Pitt — as far as opportunity of judgment is possessed by the present generation, infinitely beyond Pitt — "no one knows better how to turn and retort arguments, to seize in a moment on a weak point or an unguarded phrase." In half a dozen sentences of exquisitely modulated speech Mr. Gladstone, with the delightful benevolence with which Gulliver was able to refrain from resenting the pricking of the lance of Lilliput's doughtiest champion, played with Lord Randolph, and finally rolled him aside, turning his attention, as he said, to more serious matters.

This was all very well to begin with. But warming with his work, the Premier proceeded through a series of gymnastic exercises that would have left an ordinary man of half his years pale and breathless. Watching him as he brought down his strong right hand with resounding blows upon the Blue Book from which he had just quoted, new-comers to the House understood the fervency with which Mr. Disraeli once thanked God that the table intervened between him and his lifelong rival. So vigorous were the thumps that it was with difficulty the words they were intended to emphasize could be caught. The famous pomatum pot, which plays a prominent part on these occasions, had an exceedingly bad time. Mr. Gladstone's eye falling upon it as he fiercely gyrated, he seized it with sudden gesture, brought it to his lips with swift movement, and devoured a portion of its contents as if, instead of being an innocent compound of egg and wine, it were concentrated essence of Lord Randolph Churchill conveniently prepared with the view to his final disappearance from the scene. Sometimes with both hands raised rigid above his head; often with left elbow leaning on the table and right hand with closed fist shaken at the head of some inoffending country gentleman on the back benches opposite; anon standing half a step back from the table, with the left hand hanging at his side and the right uplifted so that he might with thumb-nail lightly touch the shining crown of his head, he trampled his way

through the arguments of the adversary as an elephant in an hour of aggravation rages through a jungle.

It is no new thing for great orators to have extravagant gestures. Peel had none, Pitt but few, and these monotonous and mechanical. But Pitt's father, the great Chatham, knew how to flash his eagle eye, to flaunt his flannels, and strike home with his crutch. Brougham once dropped on his knees in the House of Lords, and with outstretched hands implored the Peers not to reject the Reform Bill. Fox was sometimes moved to tears by his own eloquence. Burke on a famous occasion brought a dagger on the scene. Sheridan, when nothing else was to be done, knew how to faint; whilst Grattan used to scrape the ground with his knuckles as he bent his body, and thank God he had no peculiarities of gesture. But in respect of originality, multiplicity, and vehemence of gesture, Mr. Gladstone, as in some other things, beat the record of human achievement.

Travelling in Sicily in the winter of 1838, Mr. Gladstone was much struck with the ruined temples that abound in the island. In his journal of this date, he writes: "They retain their beauty and their dignity in their decay, representing the great man when fallen, as types of that almost highest of human qualities — silent, yet not sullen, endurance." This is a type of greatness of which it must be admitted Mr. Gladstone does not furnish a specimen. There

is no period in his history more fairly open to animadversion than that immediately, and for some time, following upon his fall from power in 1874. He had hitherto something more than led the Liberal party. He had, if need were, even dragged or driven them. He was inseparably bound up with their fortunes, and it is a nice question how far he was at liberty, when abysmal distress followed upon a period of exceptional prosperity, calmly to cut himself adrift. The arrangement whereby Lord Hartington succeeded him in the Leadership was not altogether hopeless, if Mr. Gladstone had carried out in the letter and in the spirit the intention of withdrawing from active participation in politics, announced in his epistle to Earl Granville. But his temperament was not suited for the exhibition of silent, yet not sullen, endurance extolled in the monuments of ancient Sicily. Even in the first Session of the new Parliament he succeeded in introducing a disturbing feature in political warfare. No one knew exactly at what hour, or in respect of what question he might not suddenly appear — as he did on the second reading of the Public Worship Bill — and upset all calculation and all arrangement. This habit grew in intensity in the following Session, and Mr. Gladstone came to be more terrible to his political friends than to the party opposite. It was all very well for the Liberals to meet in the Smoke-room of the Reform Club, and elect Lord Hartington leader, *vice* Mr. Gladstone retired from politics. It would have

been just as efficacious for the solar system to meet and elect the moon to rule by day, *vice* the sun resigned. Mr. Gladstone's erratic appearances in the political firmament were sufficient temporarily to dispose of the titular Leader of the Liberals, and to set the whole system once more revolving round himself.

In 1876 his energies found a wider and a worthier field in vindication of the right of the Bulgarians to be delivered from pillage and murder. He threw himself into the cause of this oppressed nationality with as much enthusiasm and energy as a quarter of a century earlier he had undertaken to plead for the enchained Neapolitans. He finally threw off the thin, though honestly assumed, mask of retirement, and flung himself body and soul into the conflict. The sudden awakening of energy then shown was surpassed in the last months of 1879, when he opened the first of the Midlothian Campaigns. On the eve of his seventieth birthday, in the middle of a winter of unusual severity, he set out on a triumphal progress. Day by day, sometimes twice and thrice a day, he addressed great audiences, often in the open air. Speech followed speech, none a repetition of another, and all the world agreed that never in history had there been an equal display of physical and intellectual force from a man whose years were threescore and ten.

In this undertaking, as in all others of his life, Mr. Gladstone was moved by a strong, high passion,

free from the dross of ignoble motive. Many distrusted and even abhorred the politician. All admired the man. To his contemporaries, the contemplation of his life is like a study of one of Turner's pictures made by a man with his nose an inch off the canvas. Attention is arrested by details not always attractive. They see strong mannerisms, and marvel at what they call eccentricities. To posterity Mr. Gladstone's life will be as this same picture regarded at due distance, the lurid colors softened, the angularities rounded off, the masterpiece revealed in its incomparable excellence.

Besides giving him a phenomenal physical constitution, nature was lavish to Mr. Gladstone in other ways. Education, association, and instinct early led him into the political arena, where he immediately made his mark. But there are half a dozen other professions he might have embarked upon with equal certainty of success. Had he followed the line one of his brothers took, he would have become a prince among the merchants of Liverpool. Had he taken to the legal profession he would have filled the courts with his fame. Had he entered the Church its highest honors would have been within his grasp. If the stage had allured him the world would have been richer by another great actor — an opportunity some of his critics say not altogether lost in the political arena. In addition to the gifts of a mobile countenance, a voice sonorous and flexible, and a fine presence, Mr. Gladstone possesses dramatic instincts

frequently brought into play in House of Commons debate or in his platform speeches. In both, his tendency was rather towards comedy than tragedy. It was the fashion to deny him a sense of humor, — a judgment that could be passed only by a superficial observer. In private conversation his marvellous memory gave forth from its apparently illimitable store an appropriate and frequently humorous illustration of the current topic. If his fame had not been established on a loftier line he would be known as one of the most delightful conversationalists of the day.

It is in this respect that his tirelessness habitually amazed those who came in contact with him. Ordinary men of half his age, having spent themselves in oratorical effort, are glad to benefit by a brief period of seclusion and rest. Mr. Gladstone, like all great workers, found recreation in change of employment. Asked once what was the secret of his long impregnable vitality, he quaintly answered, "There was a road leading out of London on which more horses died than on any other. Inquiry revealed the fact that it was perfectly level. Consequently the animals in travelling over it used only one set of muscles."

His contributions to literature, extending over a period of nearly sixty years, are prodigious in quantity. His earliest efforts appeared in the *Eton Miscellany*, which, in the year 1827, he mainly kept going, writing under the pseudonym "Bartholomew Bouverie."

Since then he has written pamphlets and books, the mere enumeration of which fills twenty-two pages in the catalogue of the British Museum. "The State in its Relations with the Church," published in 1838, remains the most famous. The work that had the largest circulation is the pamphlet on "The Vatican Decrees." This ran into 110 editions, and was translated into several foreign languages. The pamphlet on the "Bulgarian Horrors," published in 1876, ran "The Vatican Decrees" close, over 80,000 copies being sold. Whilst still busy with the Bulgarian atrocities, paving the way for the great triumph at the polls in 1880, he brought together what he called "Gleanings of Past Years," being a reprint in seven volumes of the articles he had between 1843 and 1878 contributed to various reviews and quarterlies. On the very day he for the last time took leave of his colleagues in Cabinet Council, he turned to put the finishing touches to his translation of the "Odes of Horace."

Mr. Gladstone's personality is one that could not fail to fascinate the public. Politics apart, he was irresistible. The tendency, equally compulsory, moved in two directions. He was at once the most passionately loved and the most fiercely hated man in England.

Some incidents illustrating the personal feeling of political adversaries have been cited. It is pleasing to note that in his closing days in the House of Commons all the asperities that at one time pricked at

his presence were smoothed down. In the final Session of the Parliament of 1886–92, there was nothing more noticeable than the attitude of respect, almost of deference, with which the Ministerial majority bore themselves towards the Leader of the Opposition. There was, doubtless, change on both sides. Advancing age seemed to have mellowed the great Parliamentary fighter. Moreover, the Conservative party were in this respect fortunate in their Leader. Mr. Gladstone always had a strong personal liking and admiration for Mr. Arthur Balfour, and bore himself towards him, when he came into the Leadership of the House, with something of a fatherly air, pretty to see, soothing amid the turmoil of faction fight.

It is amongst the masses that the fascination of Mr. Gladstone's personality works its way with fullest witchery. In the front rank of statesmen, a great orator, a ripe scholar, he is, they are glad to think, actually one of them. His homely domestic life was worth untold votes at a general election. The people liked to think of him with his plain prefix "Mr.," of his daughters who marry curates or work in schools, his sons who are "something in the City," and do not marry duchesses. They liked his stripping to the shirt to fell a tree, his going to church on Sundays and to the theatre or concert on Wednesdays or Saturdays. It is what they do themselves, or would do if they had the chance. He was one of them, to be trusted, fought for if

need be, always esteemed with a sort of family affection.

There were many manifestations of this intensity of feeling in the last Midlothian Campaign. Politics of course had much to do with drawing together the multitudes that surged round the platform wherever Mr. Gladstone spoke, or in the streets, as Glasgow filled on the Saturday afternoon he drove through the city. More striking were the demonstrations made in the remoter country districts through which he occasionally drove. There was no cottager too poor to decorate his house on the day "Mester Gledstane" was to honor it by passing by. The decoration was often only a red cotton pocket-handkerchief or a bit of ribbon of the Gladstone color. But it had the value of being home-made and spontaneous. An old lady, housekeeper at a lodge in Haddingtonshire, told me in her musically spoken Doric a little story which, better than pages of narrative or analysis, illustrates the hold Mr. Gladstone has on the common people.

"An auld man, Geordie Paul," she said, "lived all alane in a wee cot up there," pointing to a hill close by. "He used to sit at his door reading the paper spread on his knee, and mony 's the time, when he thoucht naebody was looking, I 've seen him greetin', and the tears drapt doon on the paper, and he aften muttered to himsel' 'To think they 'd use Gledstane sae ill and he sic a man!' The nicht afore Geordie deed I gaed in to see what I could dae

for him. There he was, sitting in the corner o' his bed sae weak he could na get on more than ane arm o' his jacket, but he had the paper propped up against the ither (upside doon), and the last words he said to me were: 'There 's ae (one) thing, Liz; if I could only see that Irish question settled!'"

The poor man knew little about the Irish question, the intricacies of which have baffled more fully cultivated persons. But he knew that "Mester Gledstane" had made the question his own, had devoted the closing days of his life to its settlement. That was enough for the Scottish cotter, with his dimmed eyes turned upon his newspaper, searching in its blurred columns if peradventure, before they finally closed, they might alight upon some indication of the accomplishment of his hero's heart's desire.

Mr. Gladstone's table talk was so charming that any company privileged to hear it might well be content that he should monopolize the conversation. But while when he sat at meat he was naturally the centre of interest, and rarely disappointed expectation by indulging in taciturnity, there was no sense of his monopolizing conversation, as was the case with Coleridge or Macaulay. His remarks did not take the form of monologue. They were really conversation. He did not even lead the topics, habitually enlarging on some chance remark dropped by one of the circle. But, whatever the subject, however great the authority who floated it, it generally turned out that Mr. Gladstone knew more about it

than any one in the room. Where he was most interesting was in his reminiscences of the men he had worked with during the last half-century, and of episodes in the history he helped to make. He loved to talk about Sir Robert Peel, for whom to the last he preserved some of the veneration with which he approached him when he was still a young man and Peel was in his prime. On one night that dwells in the memory he talked much more genially of Disraeli than was his wont. Admiration of his ability was generally handicapped by distrust of his moral characteristics and dislike of his tactics. On this night he was unsparing in his praise, even invented a new word in his honor. "He was," he said emphatically, "the greatest sarcast that ever spoke in Parliament;" and forthwith he rattled off half a dozen of "Dizzie's" phrases, some of them famous, all of which he had heard. It is to be hoped he never heard one, not the least clever, which the late Cardinal Manning made a note of: "You surprise me," said Lord Beaconsfield, when Manning had been comparing what he regarded as the calm, broad-balanced Gladstone of an earlier day and the Gladstone of later years. "I thought he had always been an Italian in the custody of a Scotchman."

Mr. Gladstone's memory was simply phenomenal. At a touch, at the sound of a name, everything came back to him — time, place, date, every circumstance, as if it all passed only yesterday, whereas, it may be, the incident happened forty years ago. An

admirable raconteur, he brought to the art the gifts of a rich, deep, musical voice, and singular mobility of features. He had the most wonderfully expressive face a man's soul ever looked forth from. Its varying light illumined every turn of every sentence he spoke. Sometimes it was lighted up by merriest smiles, anon clouded with awful scorn or withering anger. In the course of conversation on the night alluded to, chance reference was made to the period of the union between England and Ireland. Mr. Gladstone, following out the train of thought, related some episode in the Parliamentary negotiations, and then, his eyes flashing under frowning brows, and slowly shaking his head, he said in deep, grave tones: "It was a bad business, — a bad business." Evidently this crime, nearly a century old, was as fresh in his mind as if it had been committed that morning, and reflection upon it gave him as much pain as if he now realized it for the first time.

In a capacity for, and a habit of, throwing all his soul and body into whatever business he undertook, probably lay the secret of Mr. Gladstone's commanding force and influence. Whatever he chanced to be doing or discussing at a particular moment was regarded by him as a matter worthy the concentration of the whole of his forces. A striking instance of this finds record in an account given by Mr. Baines of his forty years at the Post Office. "Mr. Scudamore told me," Mr. Baines writes, "as instancing Mr. Gladstone's power of rapidly assimilating

information, that being one day summoned to the Treasury for the purpose, he spent an hour, between two and three o'clock, in explaining verbally to the Chancellor the intricate details of the scheme for the transfer of telegraphs as finally arranged at the Post Office. At three o'clock Mr. Gladstone said that he must then break off the conference, as he had to think over what had been told him and be at the House by four. An hour or two later he explained to the House of Commons, in Mr. Scudamore's hearing, the whole plan, principles and details included, in a luminous speech, from which not a single item of information essential to its complete exposition was omitted."

Mr. Gladstone remained to the end what he was even in Mr. Bright's prime, the finest orator in the House of Commons. In sheer debating power he was perhaps excelled by Mr. Chamberlain, who, with not less of his adroitness and command of language, has a way of going straight to a point and hammering it down, which Mr. Gladstone, allured by by-paths of illustration and commentary, sometimes failed to find. But when it came to lofty and sustained oratory Mr. Gladstone was unapproachable. This was shown in half a dozen ways. One, peculiar and convincing, appeared in connection with the duty which from time to time calls upon a Leader of the House to lament the death of an eminent member. Mr. Disraeli felt the difficulty of this situation so acutely that on a famous occasion he borrowed from a French statesman when he

desired to pronounce a eulogy at the grave of an English captain. Mr. Bright, when he rose to speak to the House of Commons of his dead friend Cobden, was movingly eloquent. But it was the eloquence of broken speech and faltering tongue. One occasion on which this duty was performed in the House of Commons by Mr. Gladstone followed upon the death of John Bright, and as, owing to peculiar circumstances, an unusually large number of members took part in the scene, there was fuller opportunity of estimating the difficulties of the situation. Mr. Gladstone at the outset instinctively touched the right chord, and throughout his speech played upon it, satisfying the exacting taste of the audience.

It was in hours like this the House of Commons saw, through the haze of party conflict, how noble were the proportions of the figure that dwelt amongst it for more than fifty years. In a fine passage in a speech delivered at Birmingham in June, 1885, Mr. Chamberlain, little dreaming what a year might bring forth, described Mr. Gladstone's position in words that leave nothing more to be said: —

"I sometimes think that great men are like great mountains, and that we do not appreciate their magnitude while we are still close to them. You have to go to a distance to see which peak it is that towers above its fellows; and it may be that we shall have to put between us and Mr. Gladstone a space of time before we shall know how much greater he has been than any of his competitors for fame and power. I am certain that justice will be done to him in the future, and I am not less certain that there will be a signal condemnation of the men who, moved by motives of party spite, in their eagerness for office,

have not hesitated to load with insult and indignity the greatest statesman of our time; who have not allowed even his age which should have commanded their reverence, or his experience which entitles him to their respect, or his high personal character or his long services to his Queen and to his country, to shield him from the vulgar affronts and the lying accusations of which he has nightly been made the subject in the House of Commons. He, with his great magnanimity, can afford to forget and forgive these things. Those whom he has served so long it behooves to remember them, to resent them, and to punish them."

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